

TOTAL ECLIPSE

BOOK  FIVE



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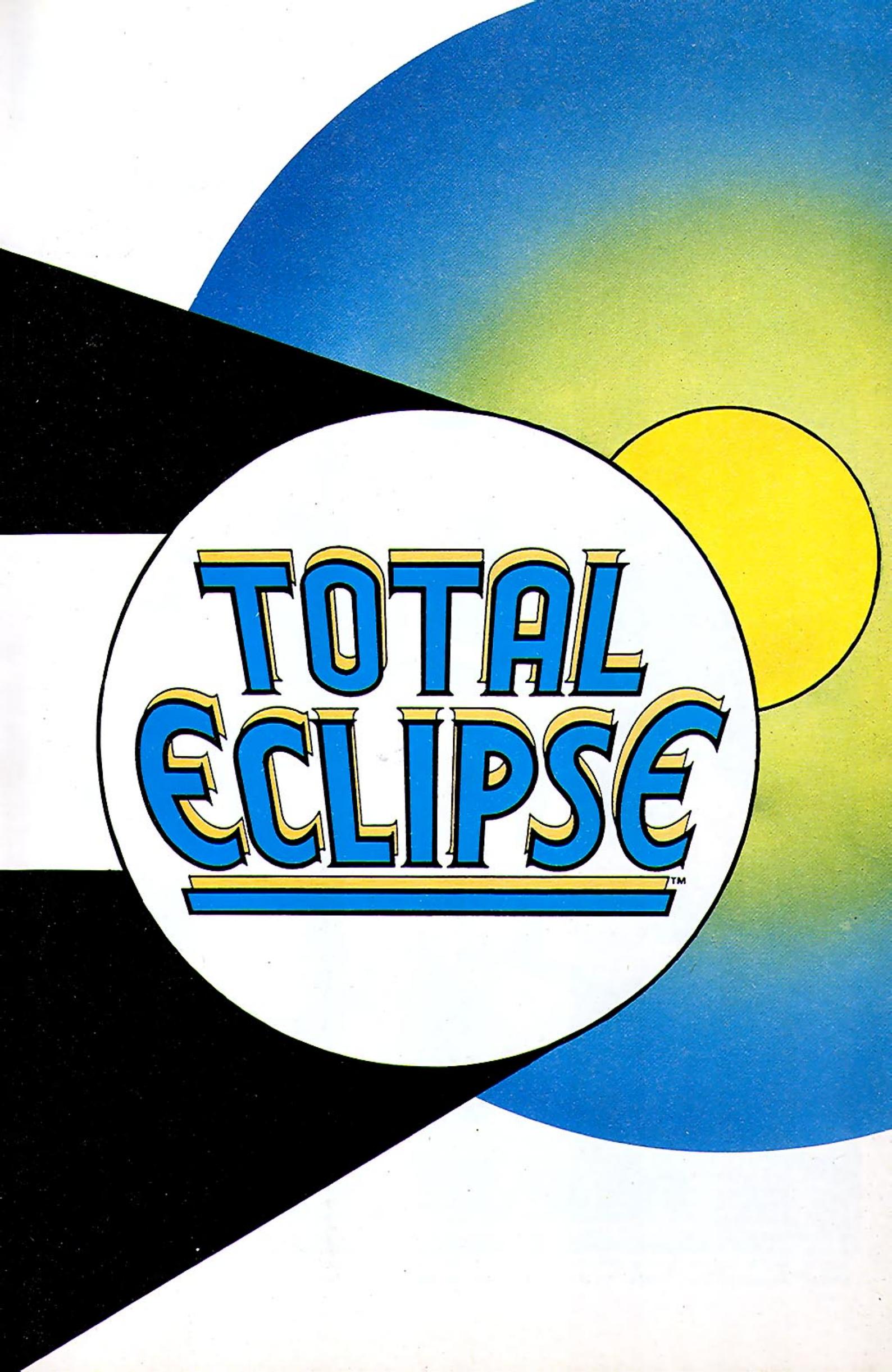
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IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS SILENCE-- THE SILENCE OF EMPTINESS, THE SILENCE OF NON-EXISTENCE, WHEN SPACE WAS AN EBONY SWIRL WITHOUT GLOBES OF LIGHT OR SPARK OF LIFE.

NOW THERE IS SILENCE AGAIN. THE SILENCE OF EMPTINESS. THE SILENCE OF THINGS LOST.

Finale!

DENNIS FOREMAN IS GONE. THE YOUTH WHO WAS CALLED STRIKE! IS DEAD.

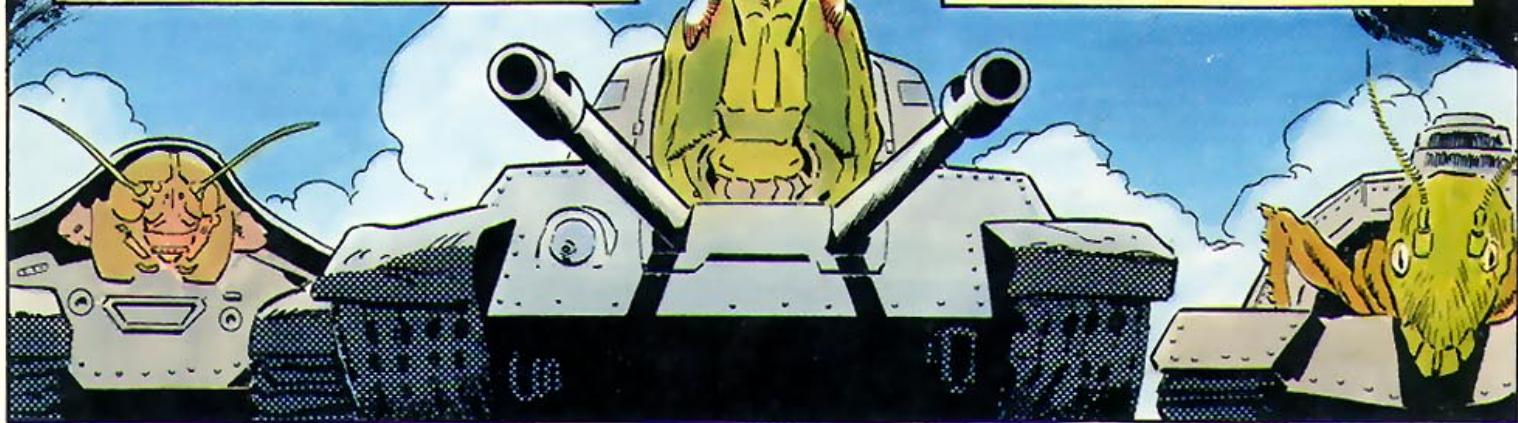
AND THOSE WHO ARE HIS FRIENDS...



...CAN DO LITTLE MORE THAN DWELL IN THE MUCK OF THEIR OWN MORTALITY.

THE TIME FOR GAMES IS LONG GONE. DRESSING UP IN SKIN-TIGHT SPANDEX OR LEATHER, BEING OUTFITTED IN HARNESS OR HELMET, HAS LOST ITS GLITTERY ALLURE.

DEATH IS NOT FUN TO BE FACED WITH QUICK QUIPS AND HOWLS OF LAUGHTER. DEATH CUTS THROUGH THE HEART: PERMANENT LOSS, PERMANENT BETRAYAL.



ROBIN HOOD WAS A LIE. MERRY MEN CUTTING A SWATH OF JOY THROUGH THE FIELDS OF DECEIT. HOW MANY MEN DIED WITH ERROL FLYNN'S LAUGH ON THEIR BLOOD-CAKED LIPS? HOW MUCH EVIL WAS TRULY STOPPED?



I KEPT WARNING HIM... WARNING HIM THAT IT WASN'T ALL FUN AND GAMES.

BUT I DON'T THINK HE EVER BELIEVED.

CAN'T YOU SEE, MAN? WE'VE ALREADY LOST!

DENNIS'S FIGHT ISN'T OVER. WE MUST GO ON, LAD.

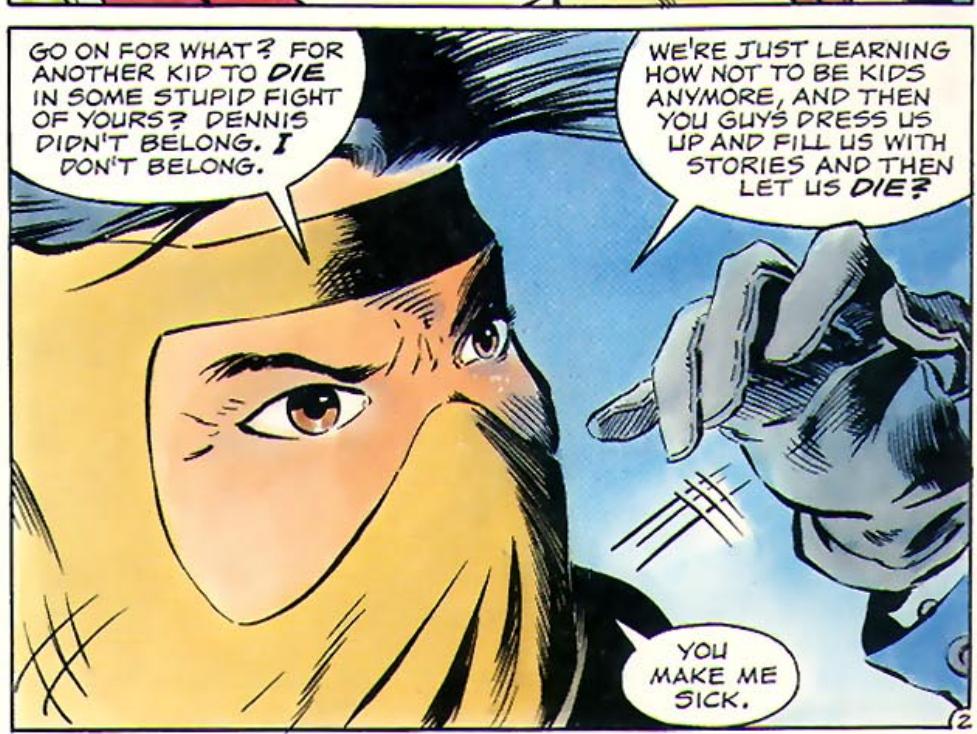
GO ON, LEO? GO ON?



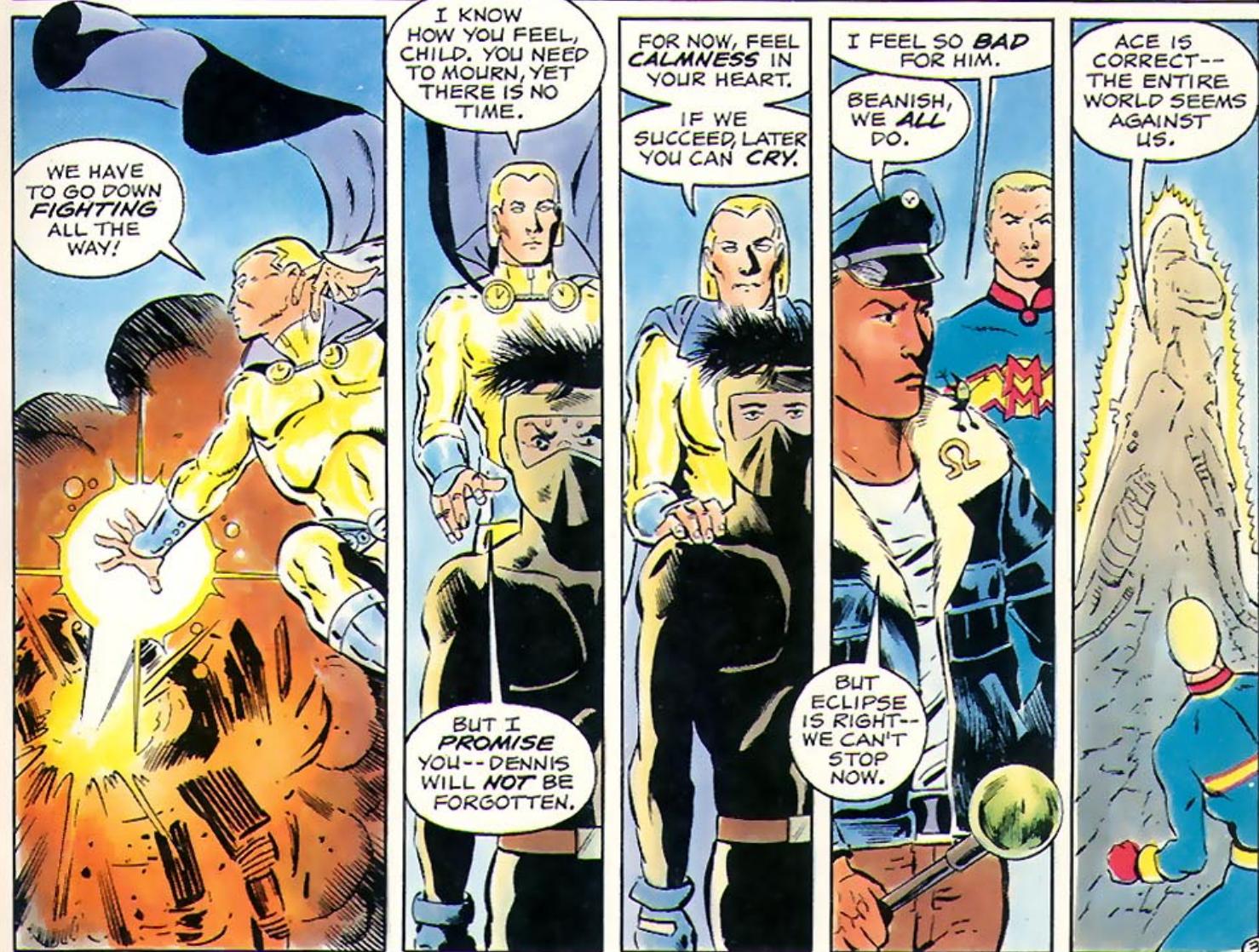
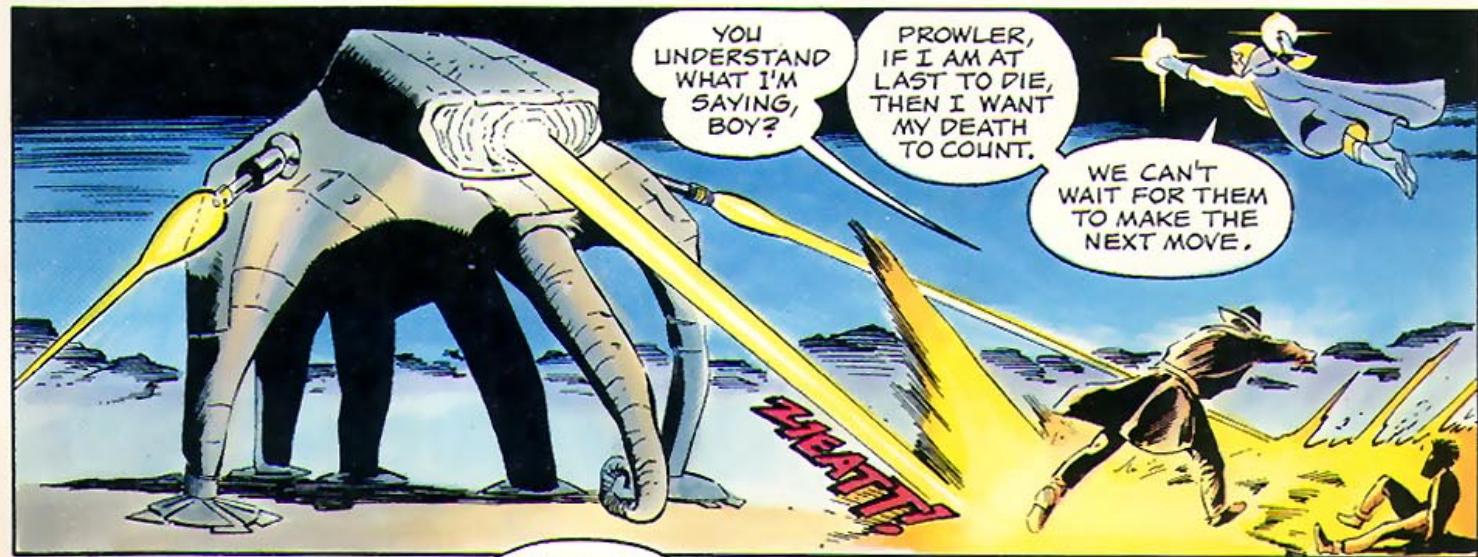
GO ON FOR WHAT? FOR ANOTHER KID TO DIE IN SOME STUPID FIGHT OF YOURS? DENNIS DIDN'T BELONG. I DON'T BELONG.

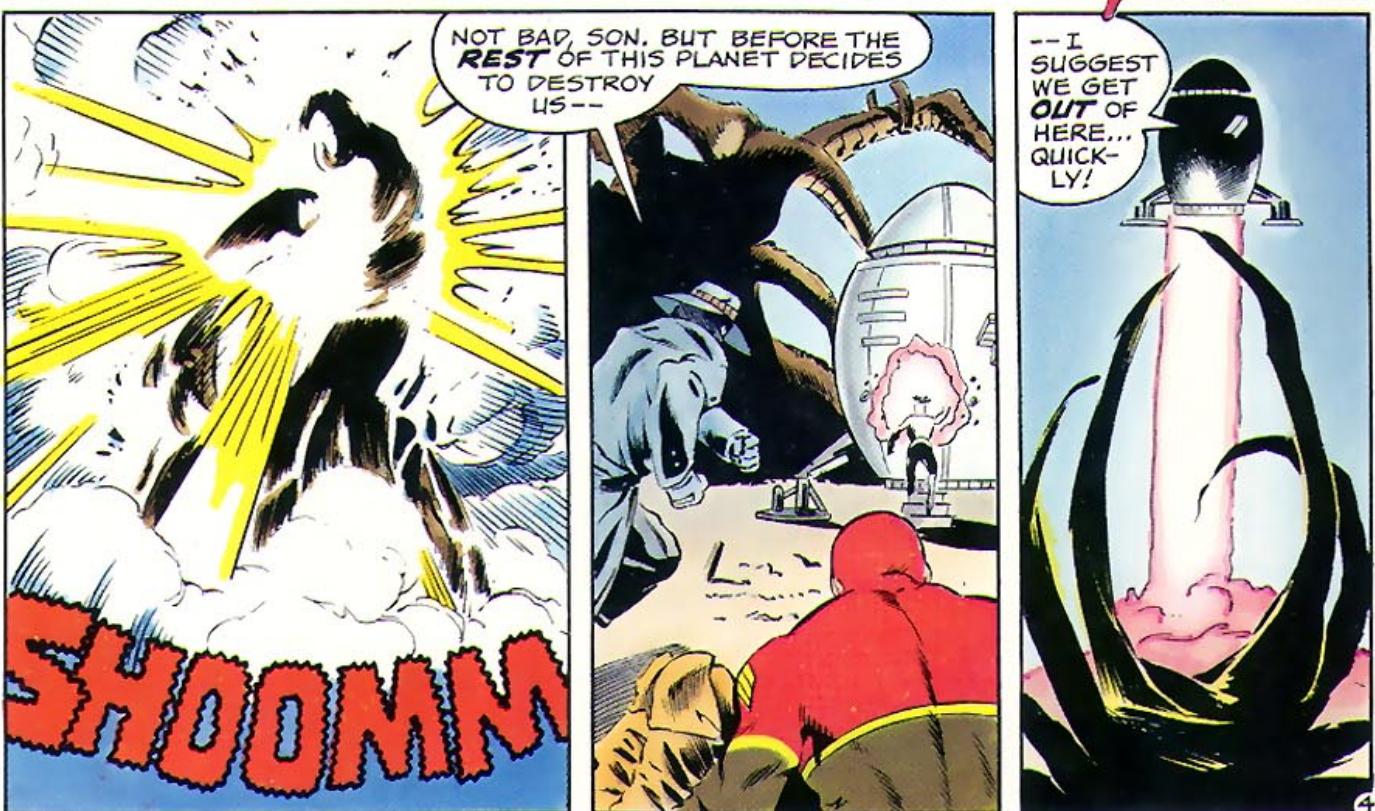
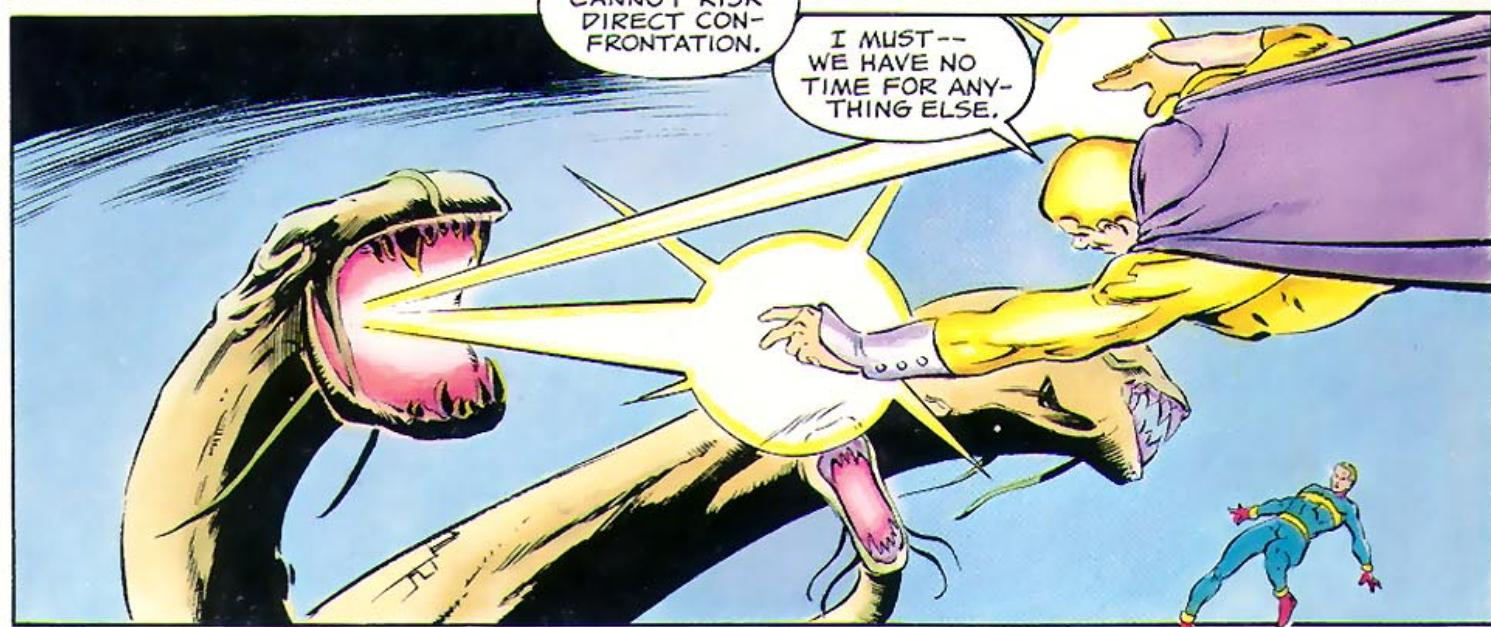
WE'RE JUST LEARNING HOW NOT TO BE KIDS ANYMORE, AND THEN YOU GUYS DRESS US UP AND FILL US WITH STORIES AND THEN LET US DIE?

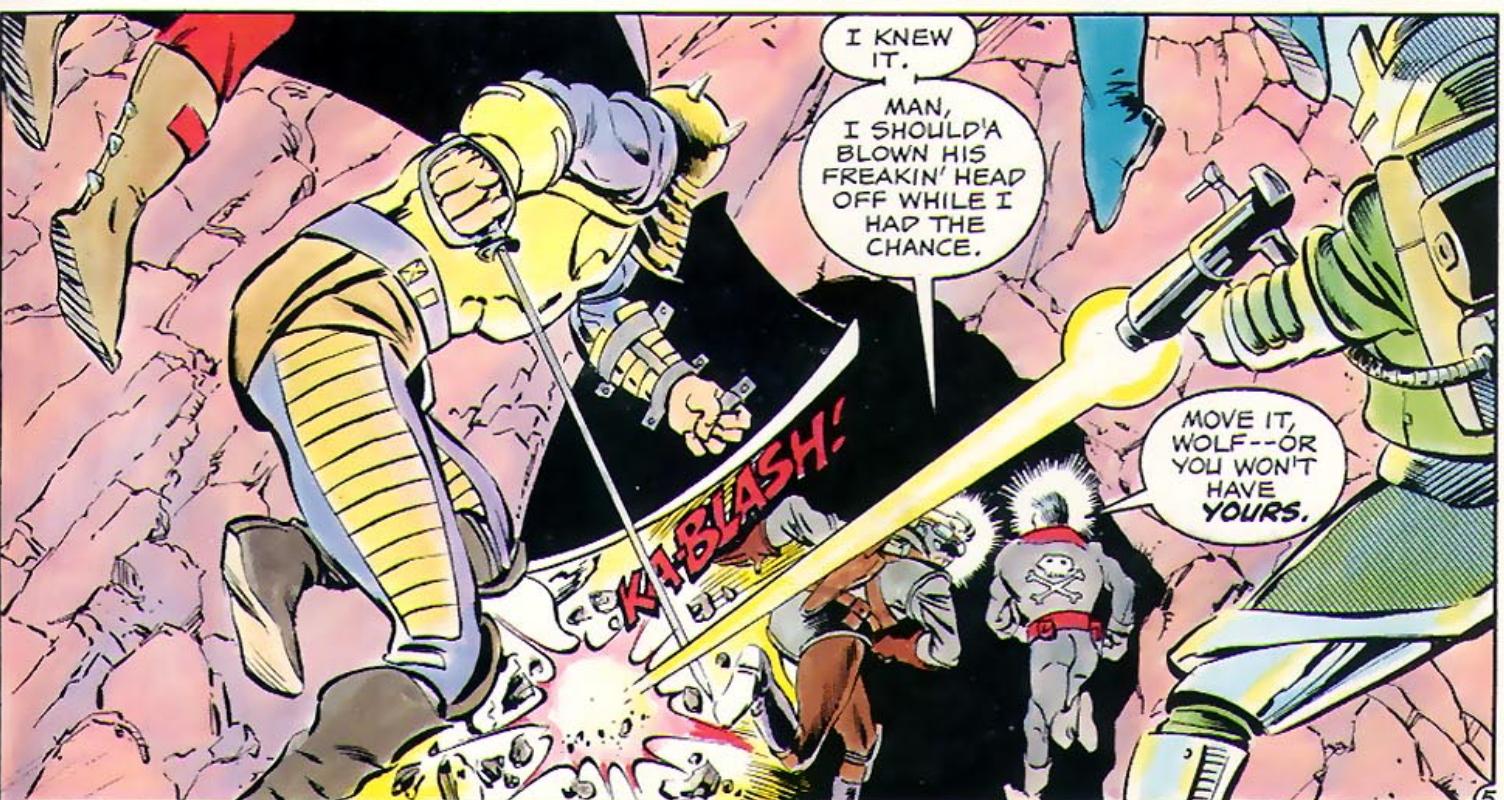
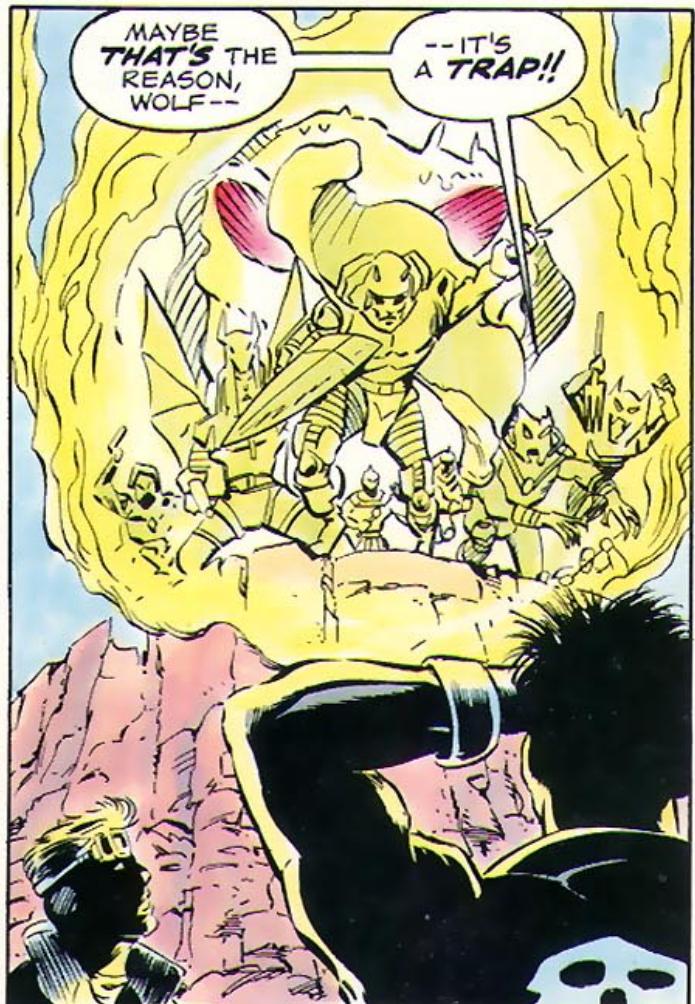
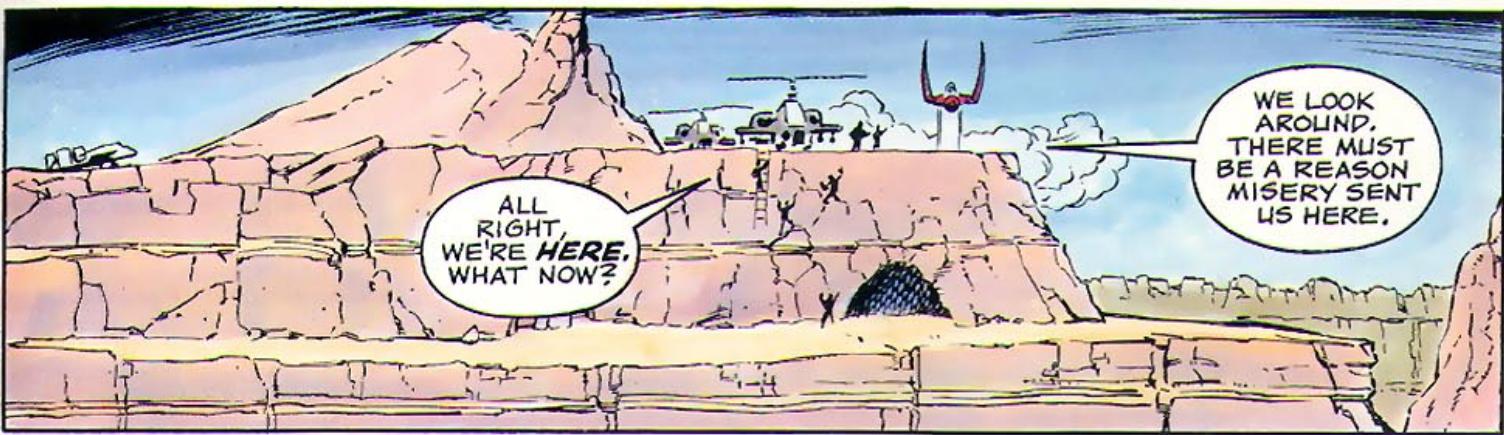
SCOTT KIDA'S MIND ROLLS AND ROLLS IN GREY-FOGGED QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS.

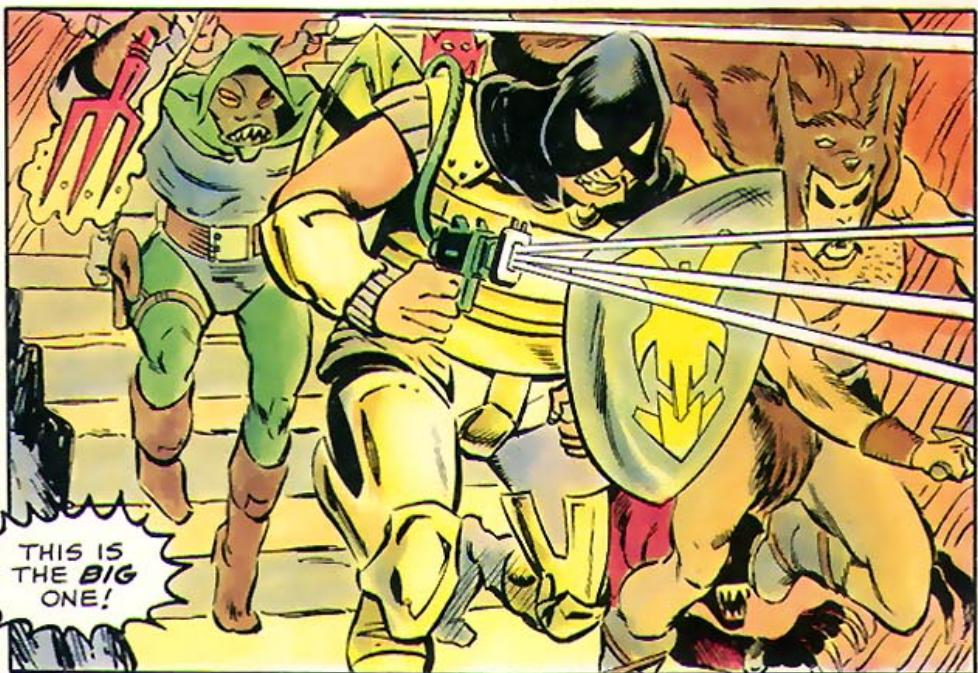
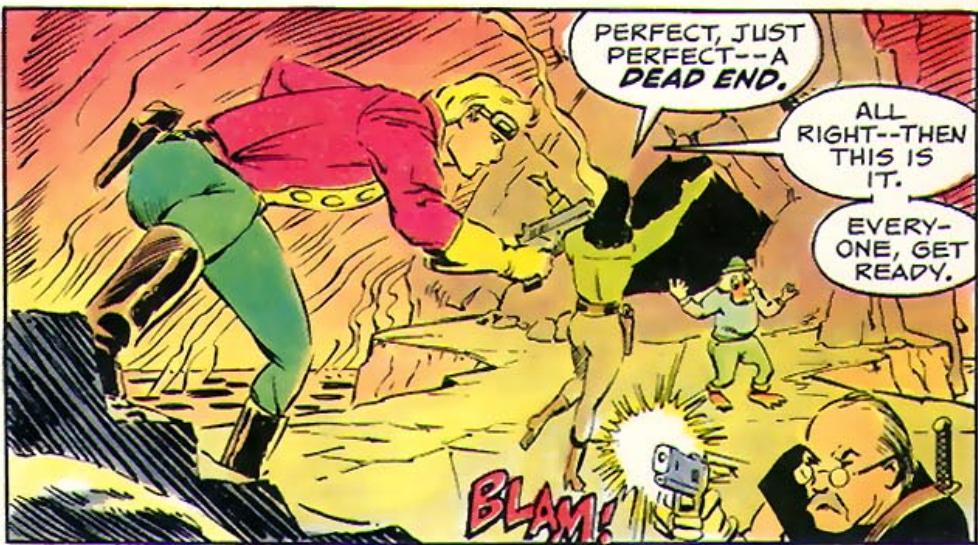


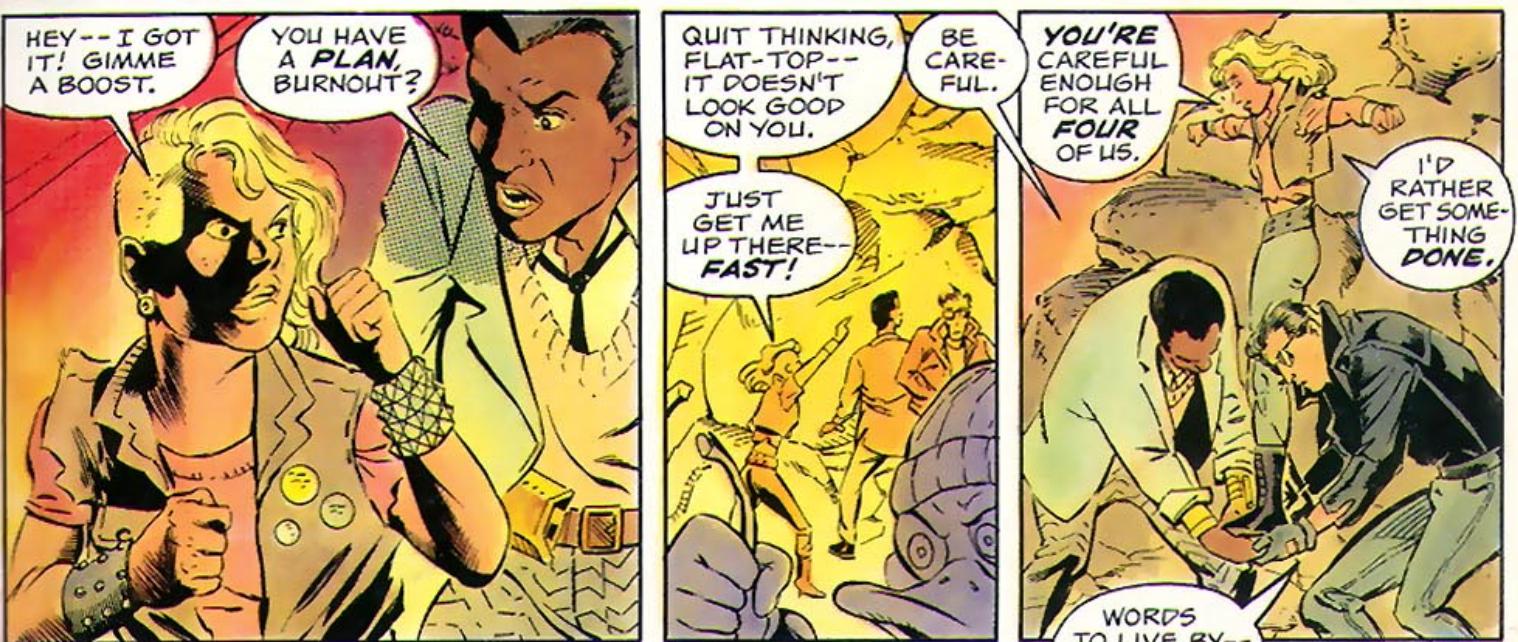
YOU MAKE ME SICK.

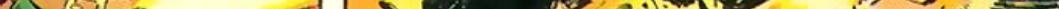
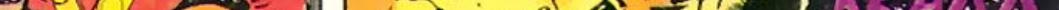
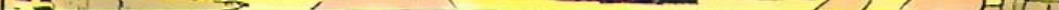


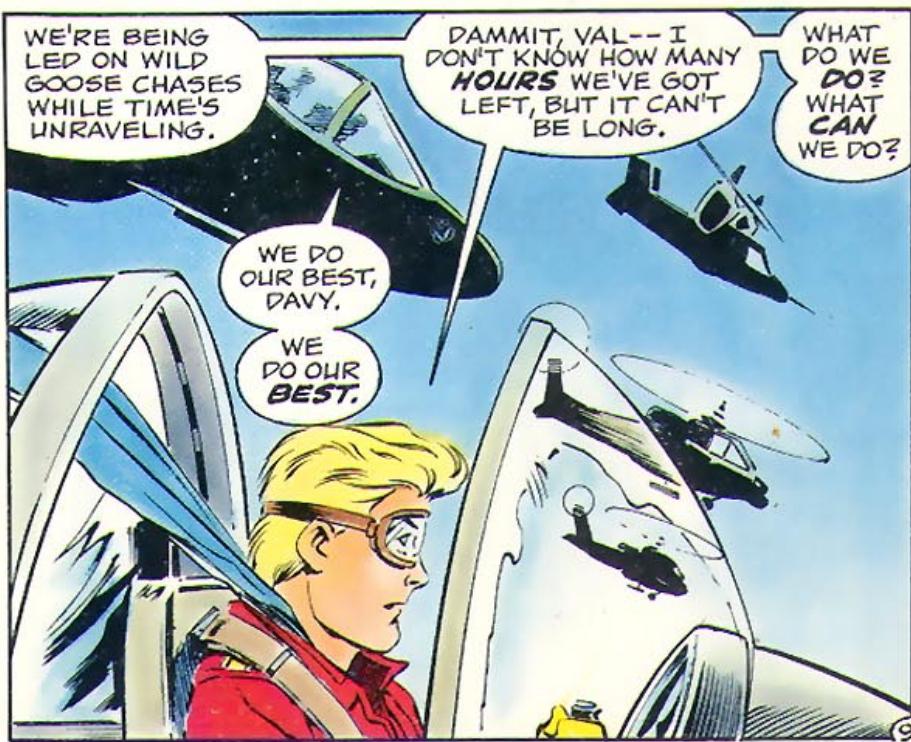
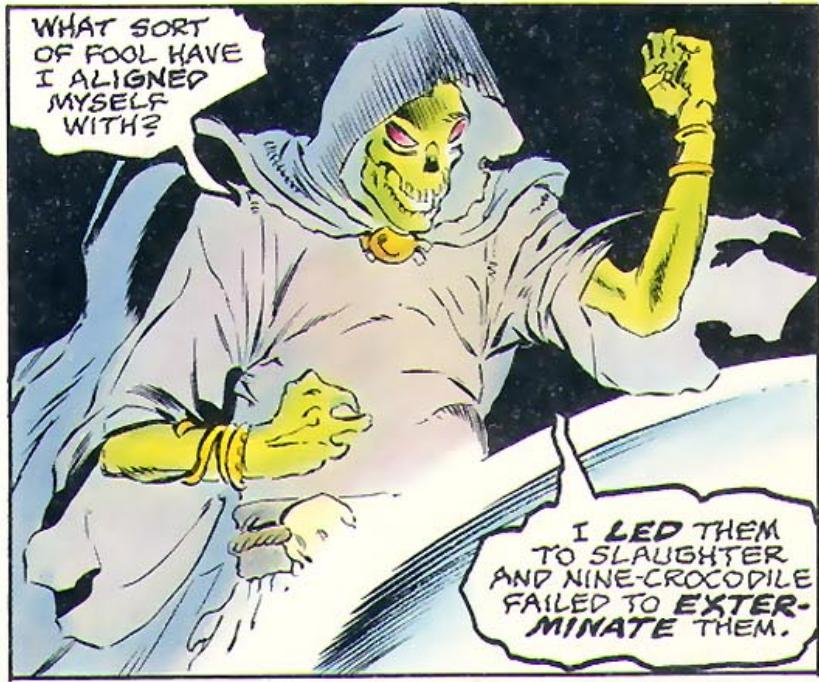


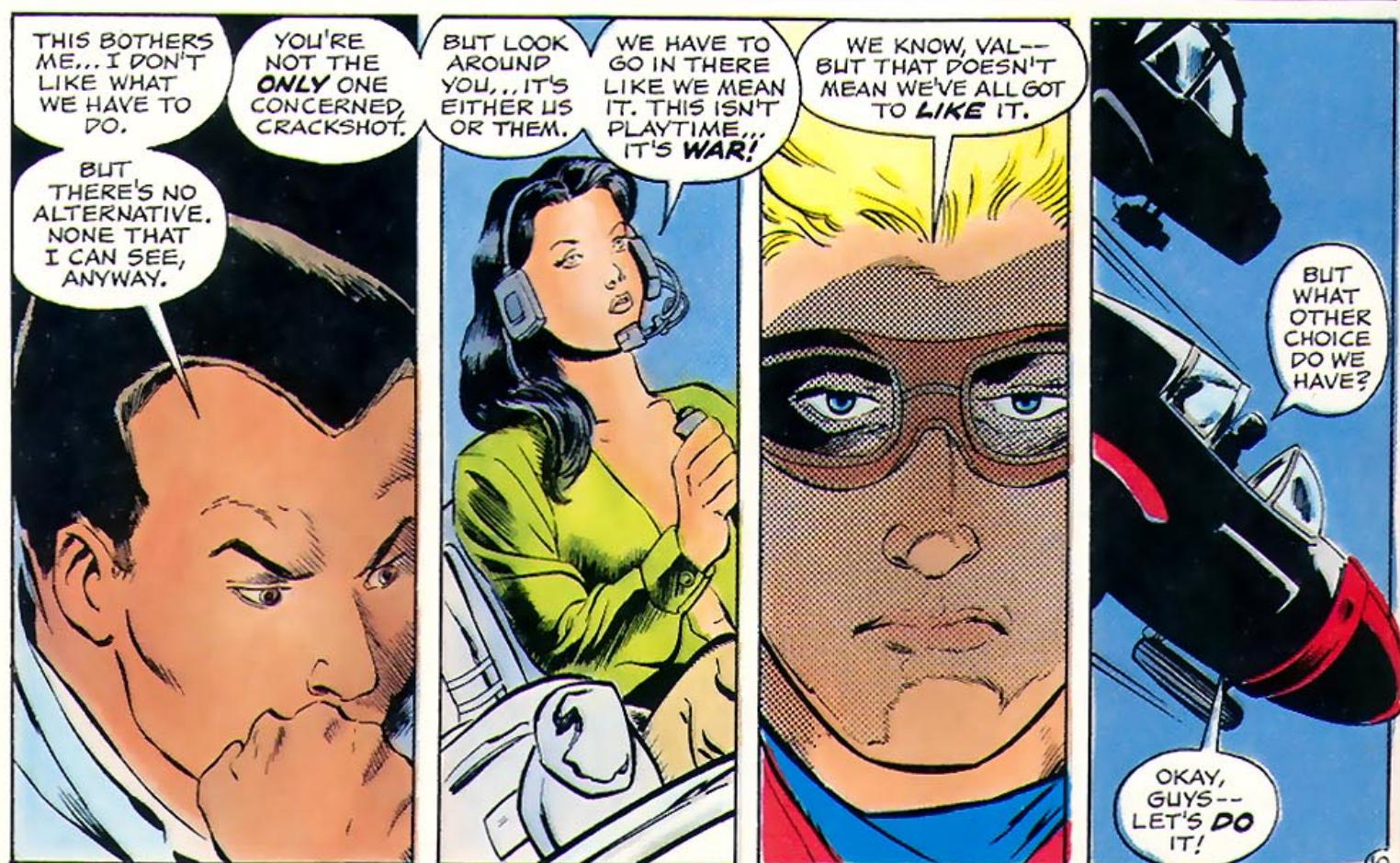
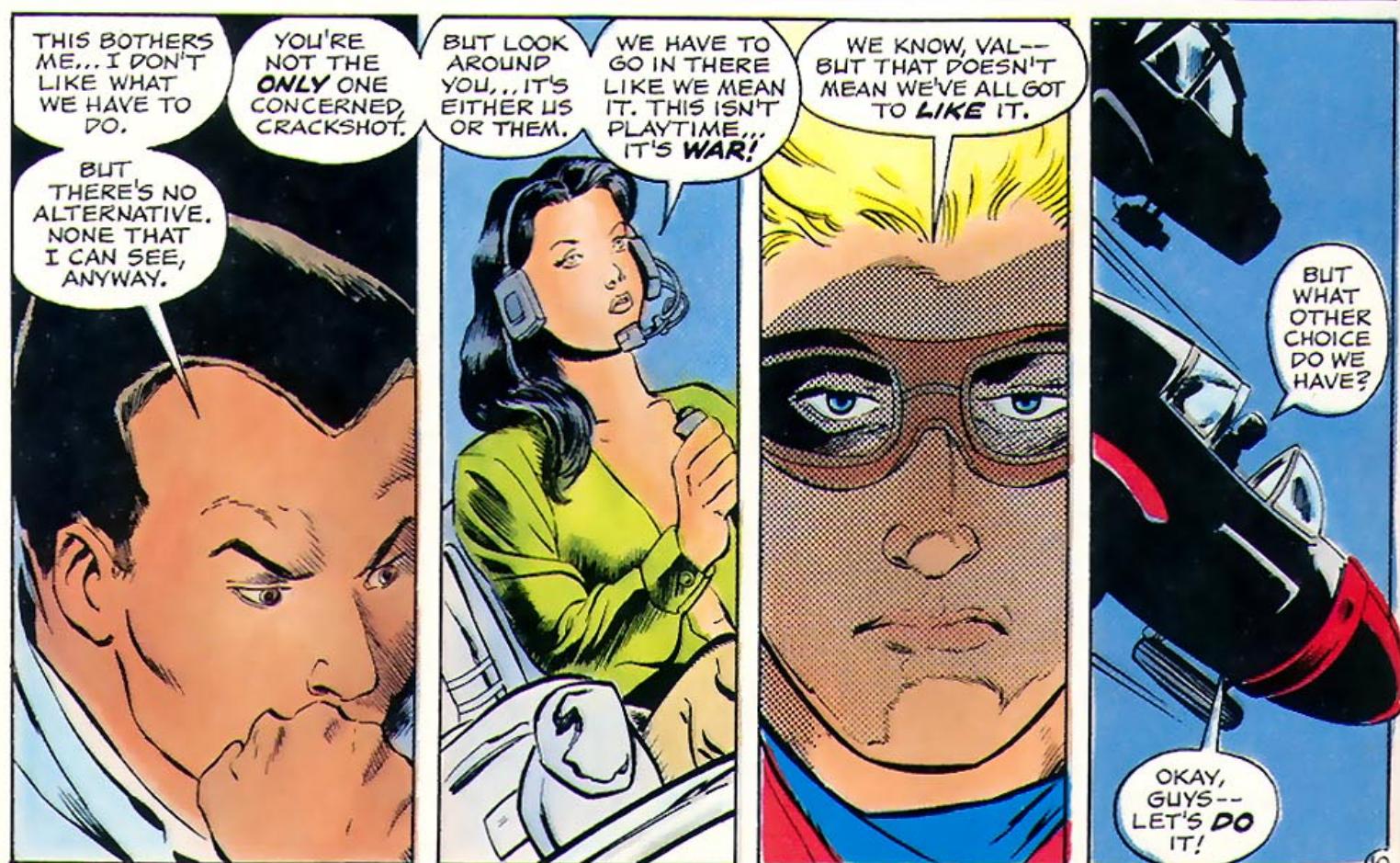
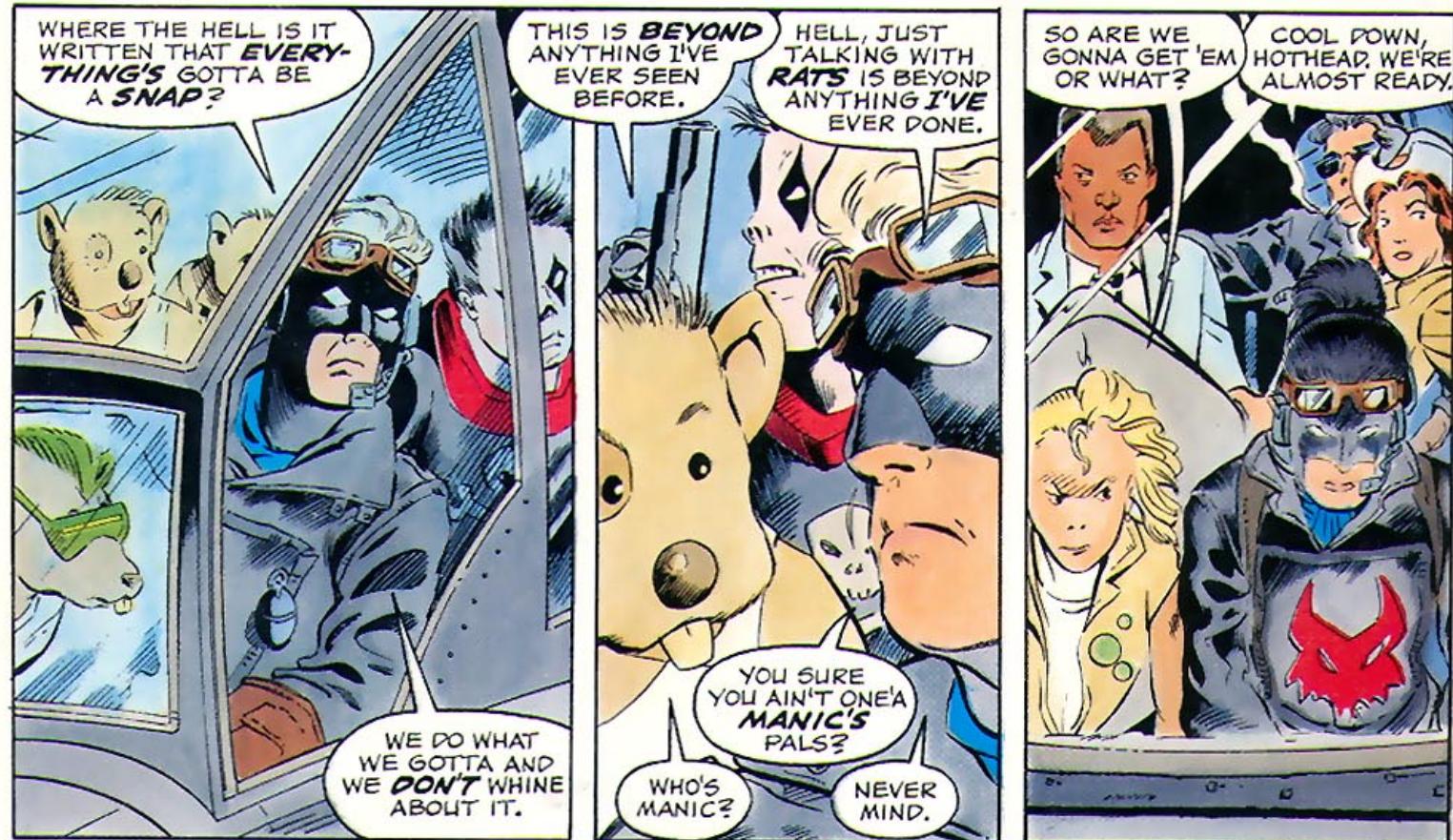


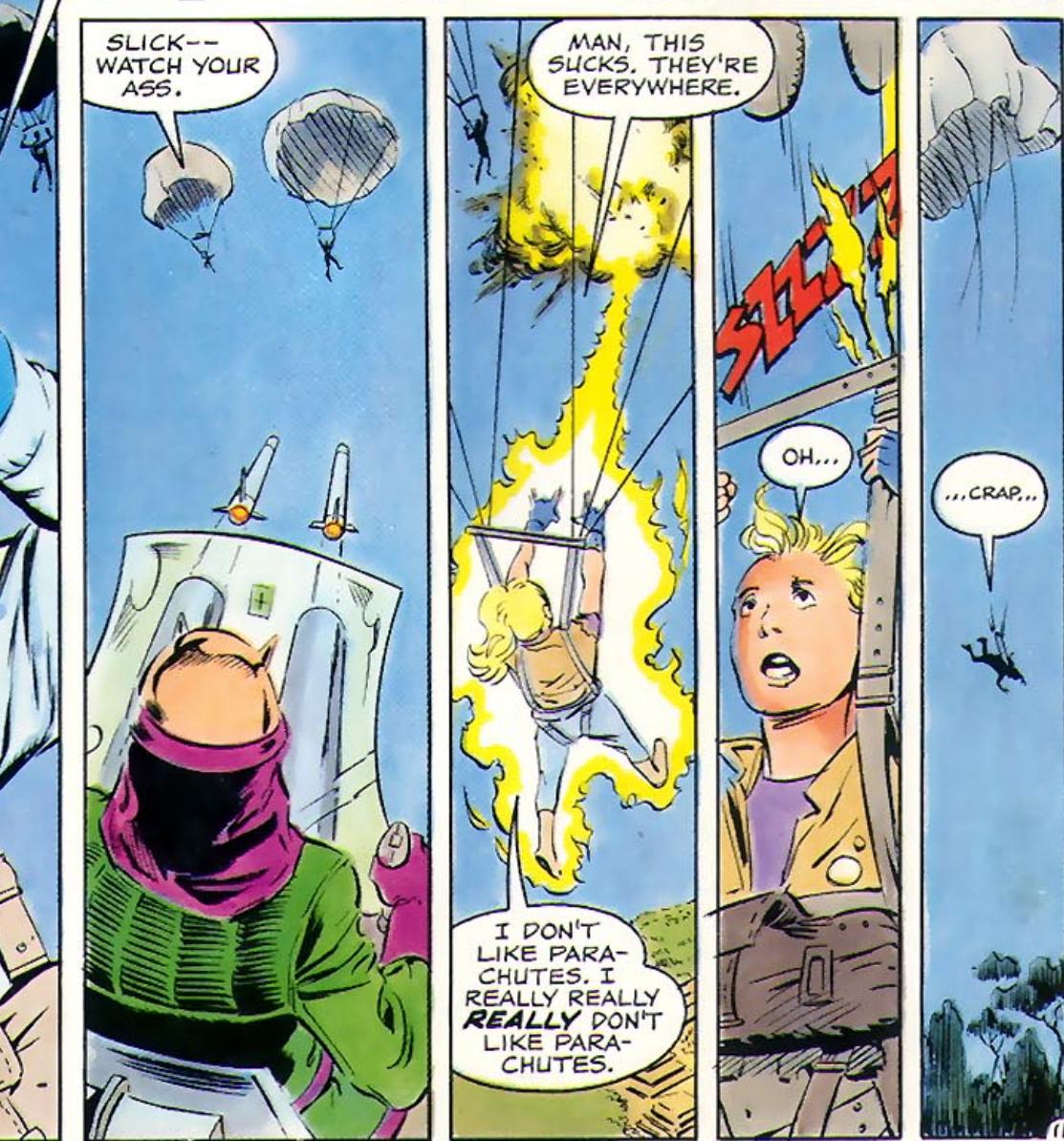
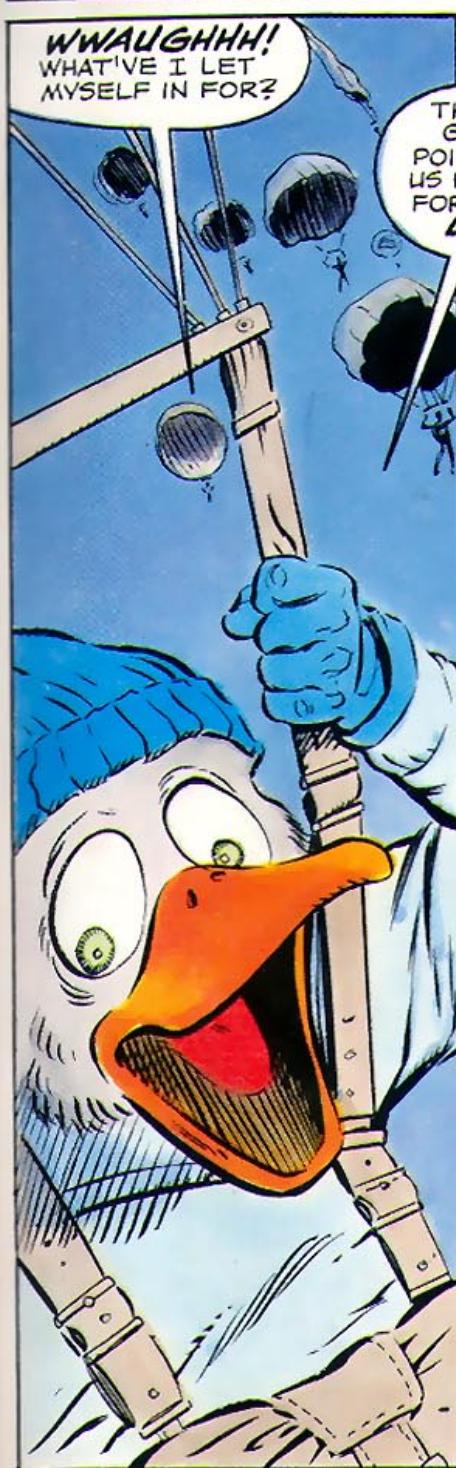
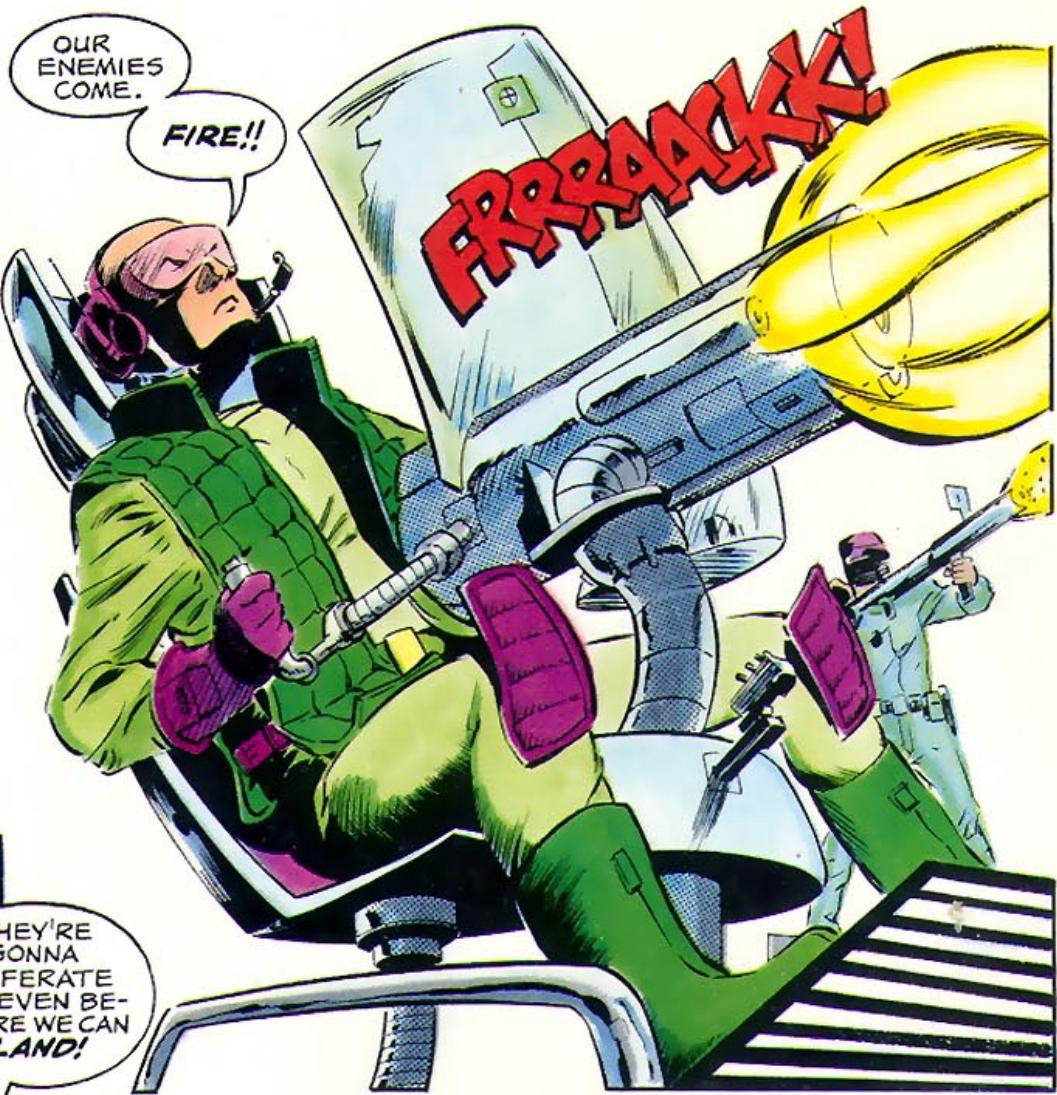


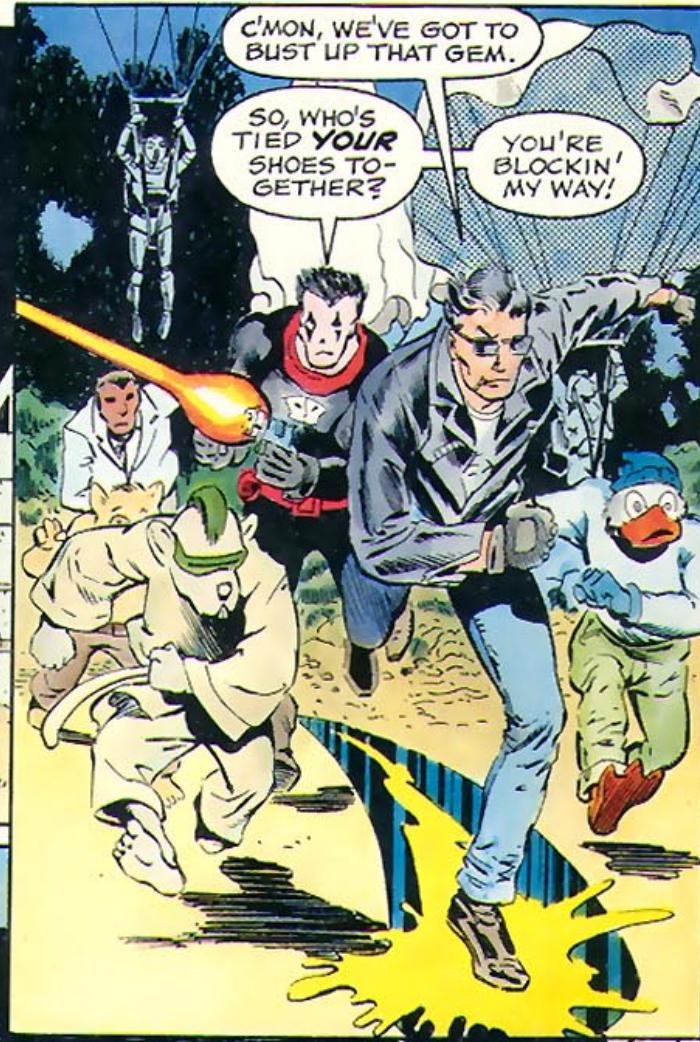
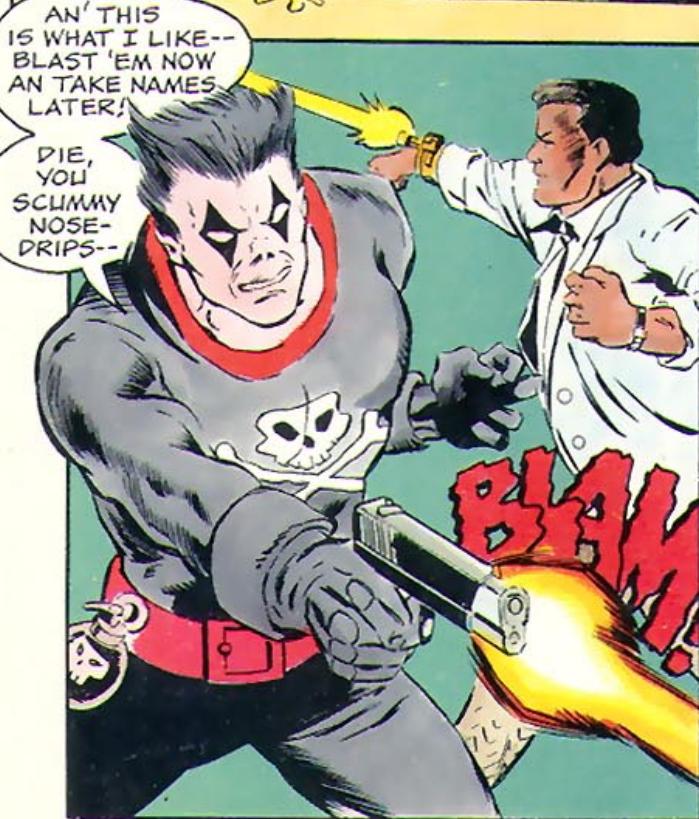












THE EBONATI ARE
TOO SLOW TO
STOP US.

Chooooom!

WE CAN
MAKE IT
IF WE KEEP
MOVING.

BRRRRTT!

VIP!
VIP!

THEN BREAK 'EM IN TWO AND MAIL 'EM
BACK AS DAMAGED GOODS.

THAT IS
INDEED WHAT
I AM ATTEM-
PTING TO DO.

WELL, PUT
A LITTLE **HEART**
INTO IT! LET 'EM
KNOW YOU'RE
HERE.

IS THIS ALL
I'M EVER GONNA
DO WITH MY LIFE--
LINE 'EM UP AND
KNOCK 'EM
DOWN?

SLICK
SAYS "GET
'EM, GIRL!"

--AND
I'M ON 'EM
LIKE UGLY ON
AN IGUANA.

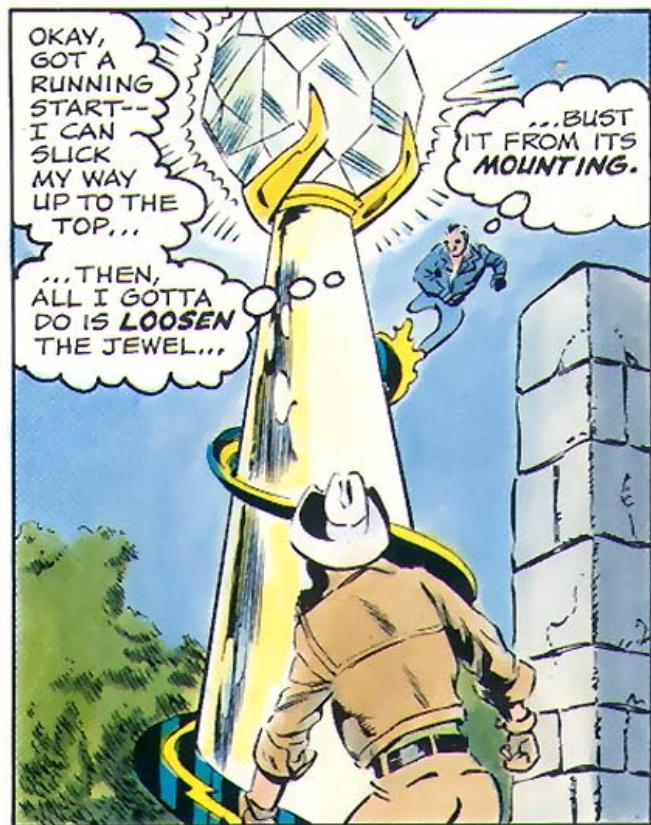
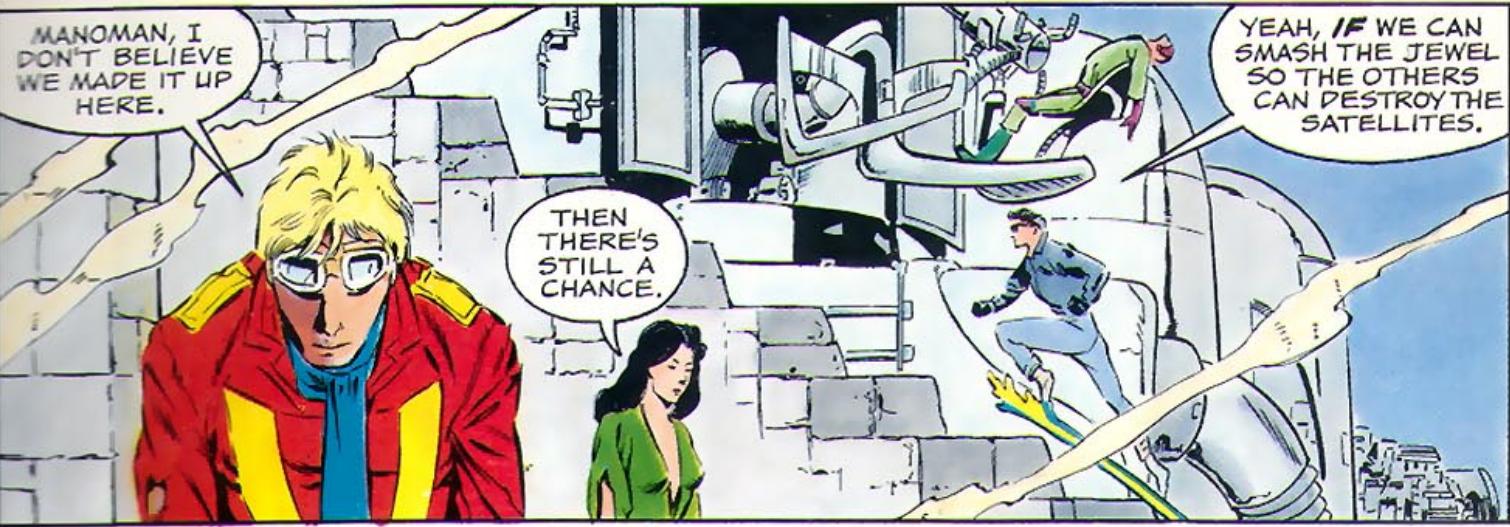
WELL,
COULD
BE
WORSE--

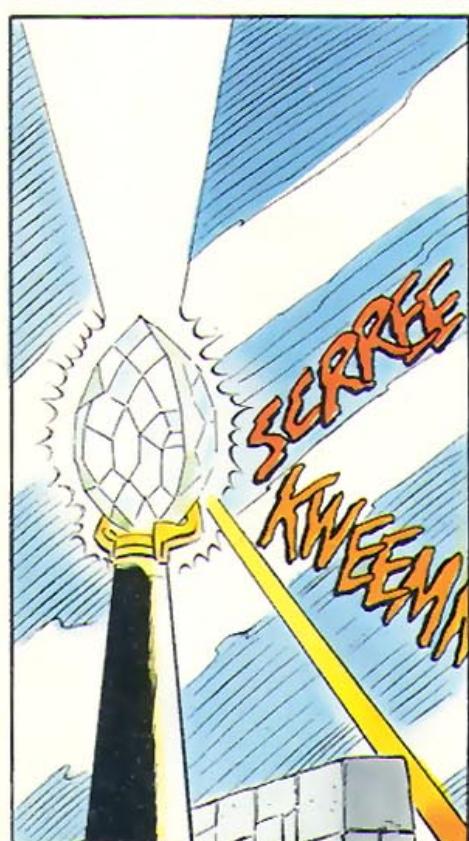
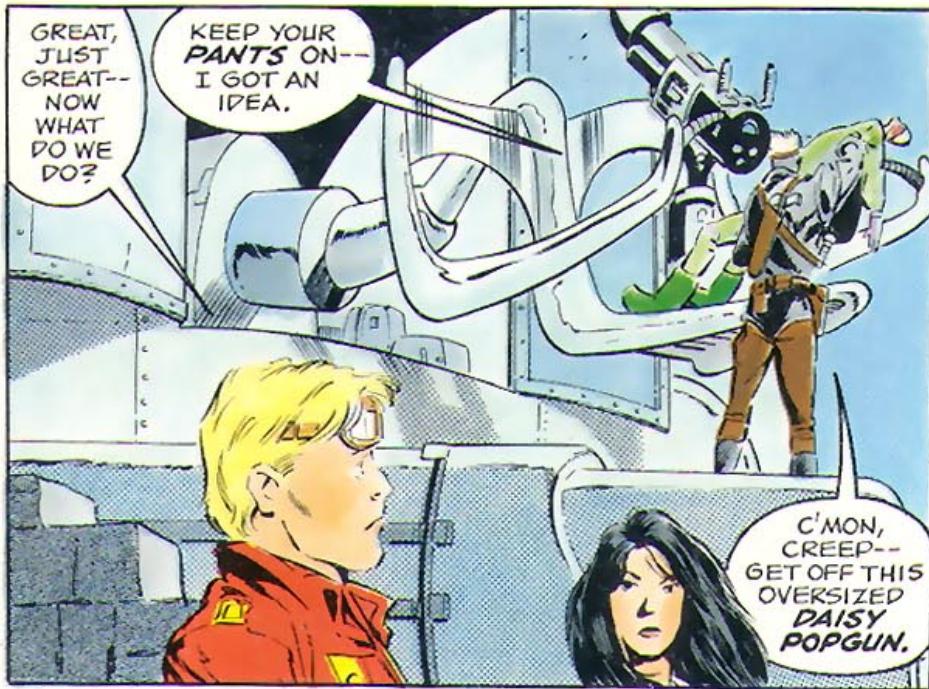
--LEAST-
WAYS, IT'S
FUN.

"OUT OF THE
WAY, HOSS--
I'M CARRYIN'
THE MAIL!!"

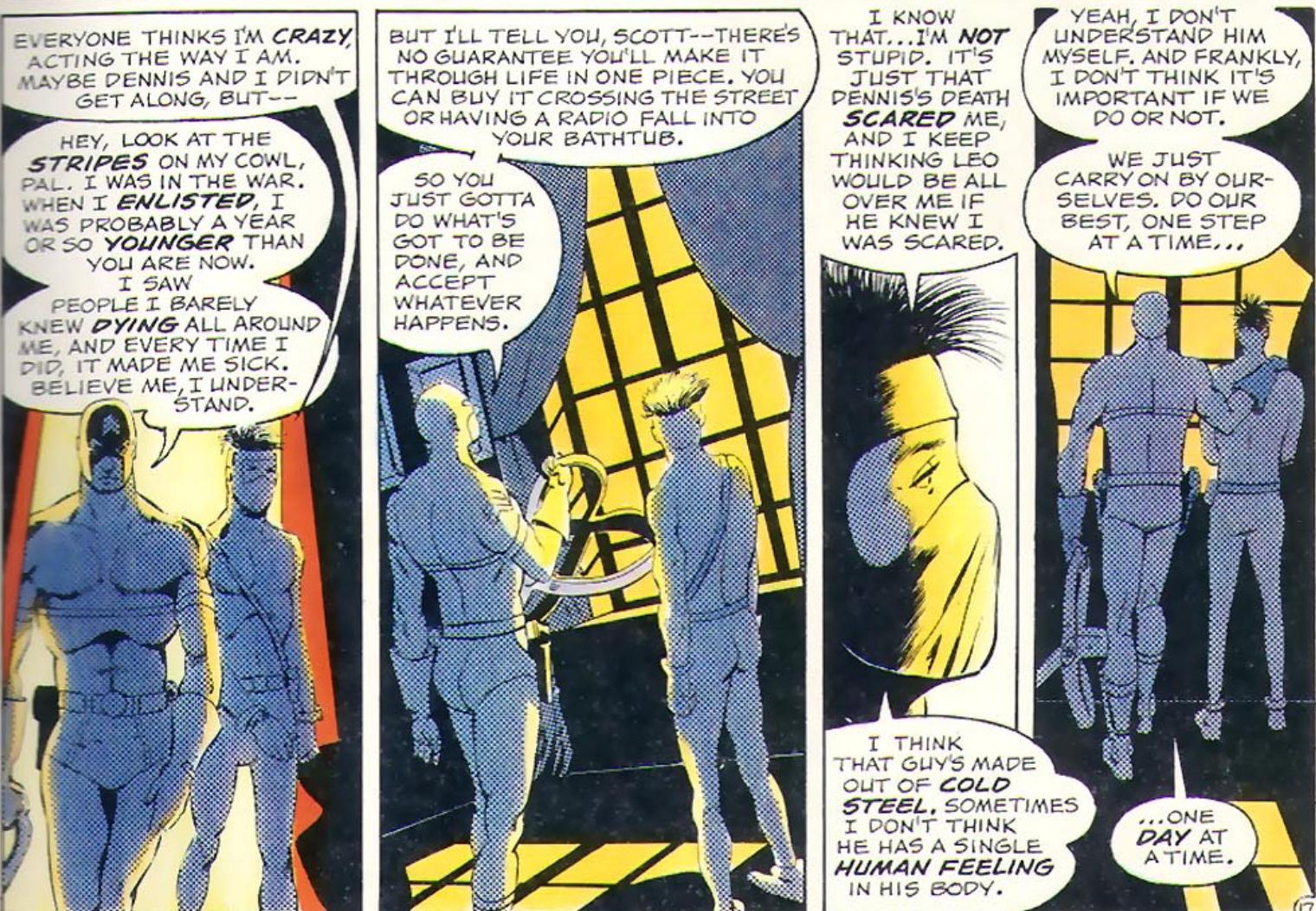
Bolt!



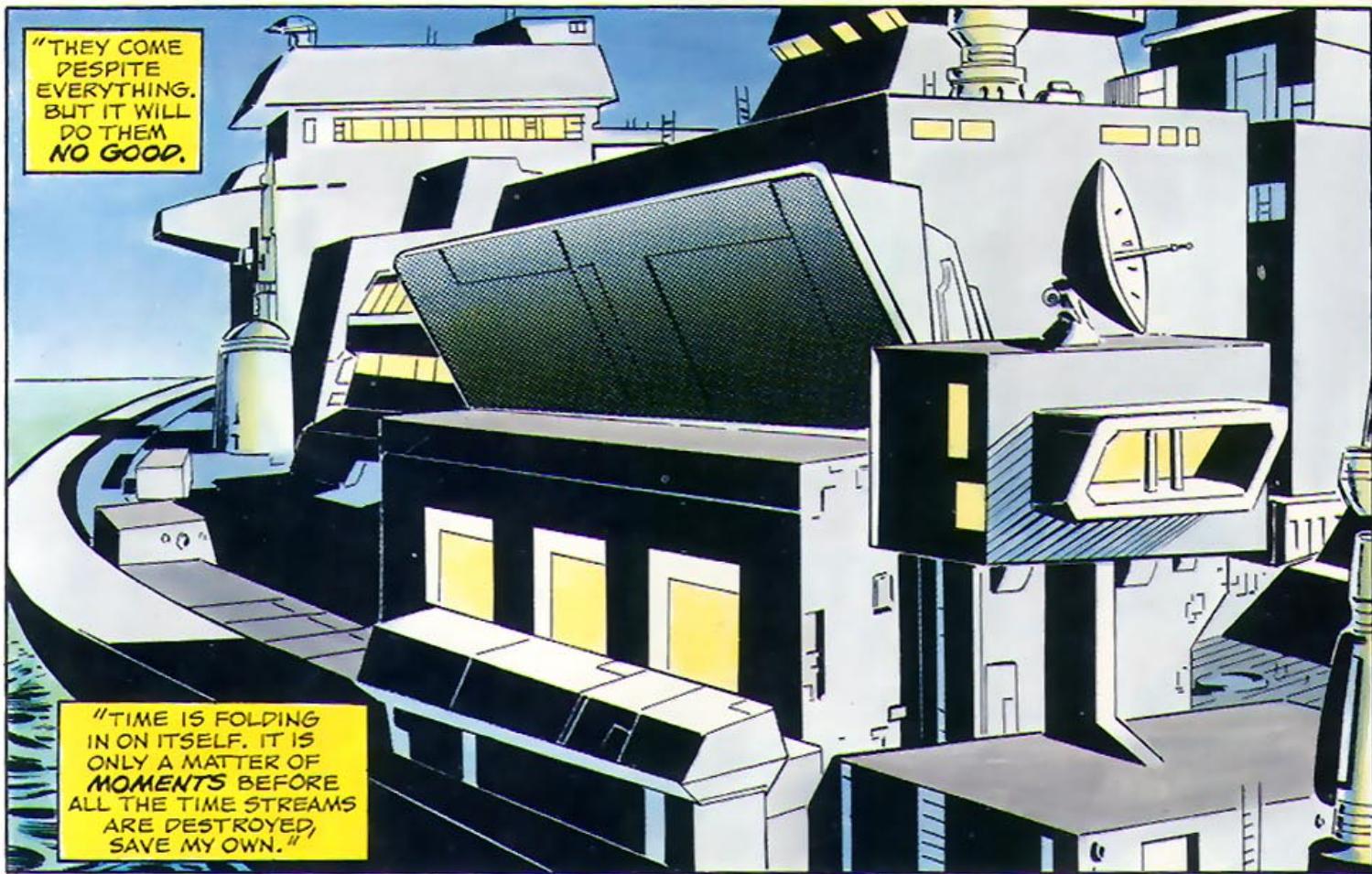




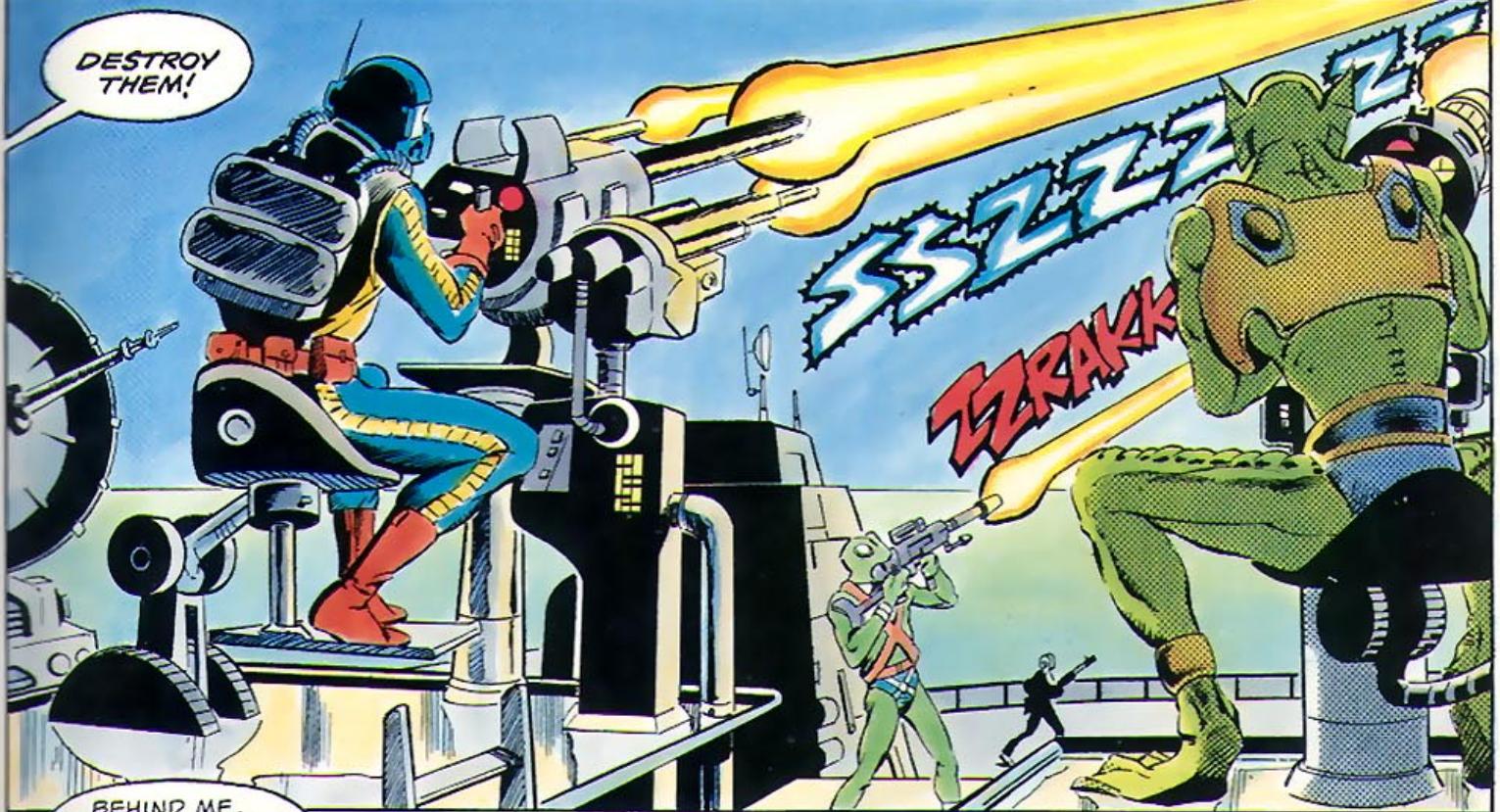
A TIME-OUT OUT OF TIME...



"THEY COME DESPITE EVERYTHING. BUT IT WILL DO THEM NO GOOD."



DESTROY
THEM!



BEHIND ME.
I WILL SUMMON
A FORCE SHIELD
TO PROTECT US.

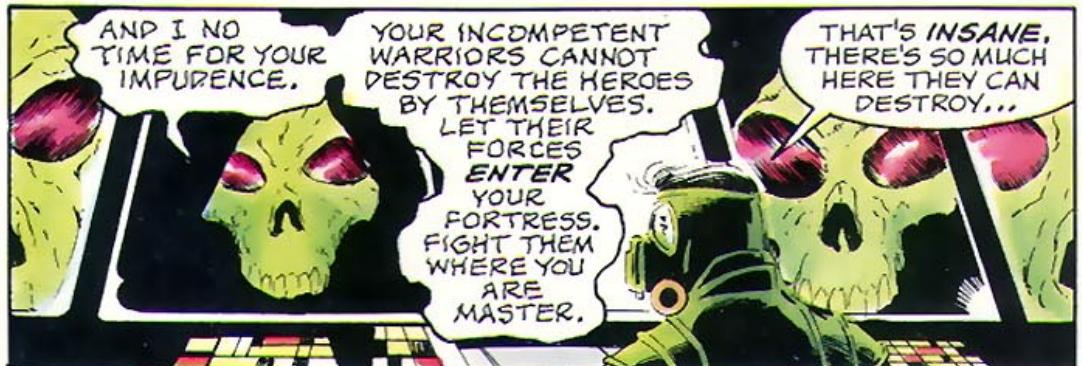


THEY CONTROL THE
TEMPLE, BUT THEY
CAN'T DESTROY IT.

MY SATELLITES ARE IMPERVIOUS TO THEIR
ATTACKS, AND YET THEY STILL MOVE CLOSER.
THEY'RE FOOLS...THEY'RE--

NINE-
CROCODILE...

MISERY? WHAT
IS IT? I HAVE NO
TIME FOR GAMES.



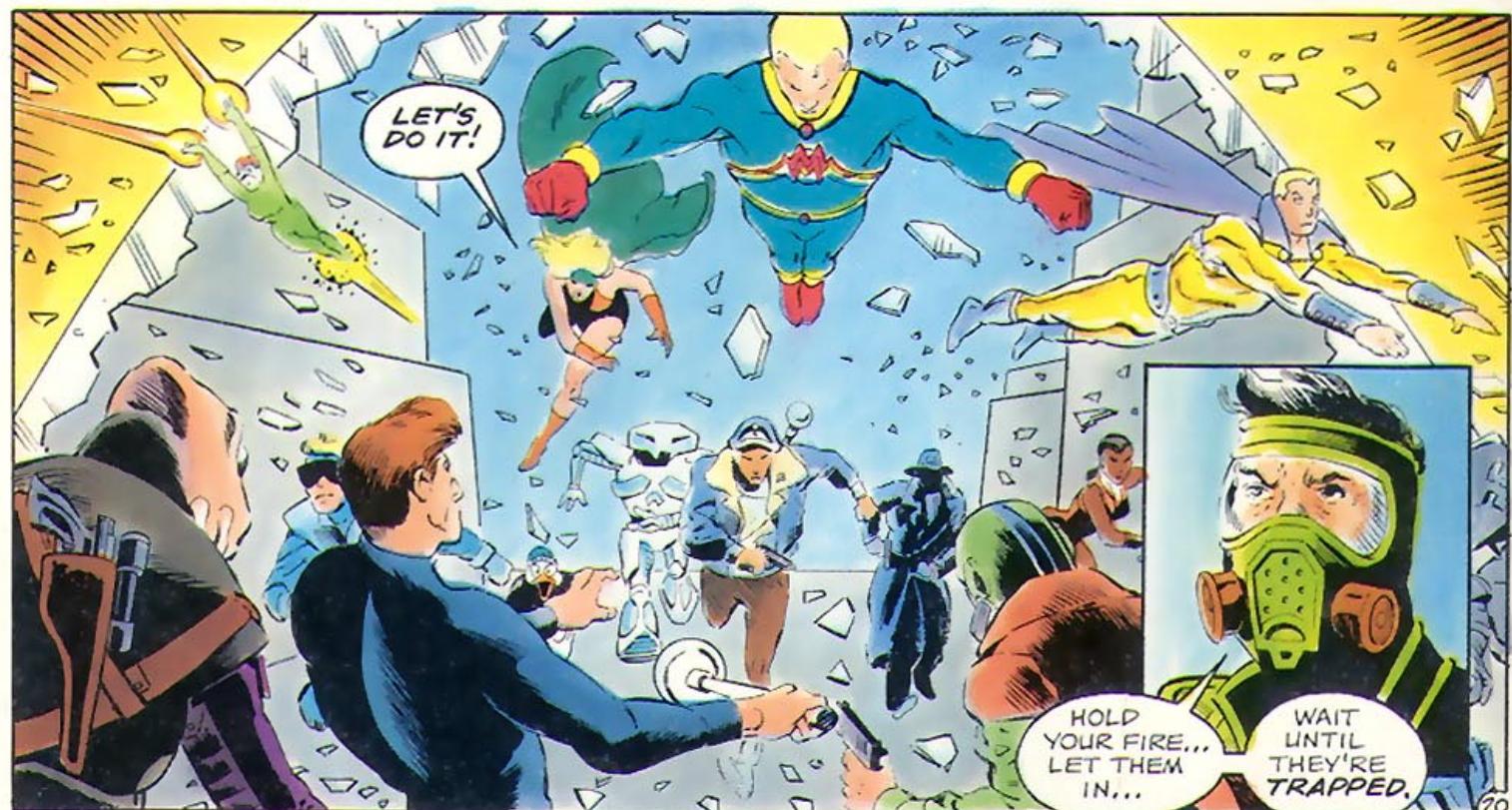
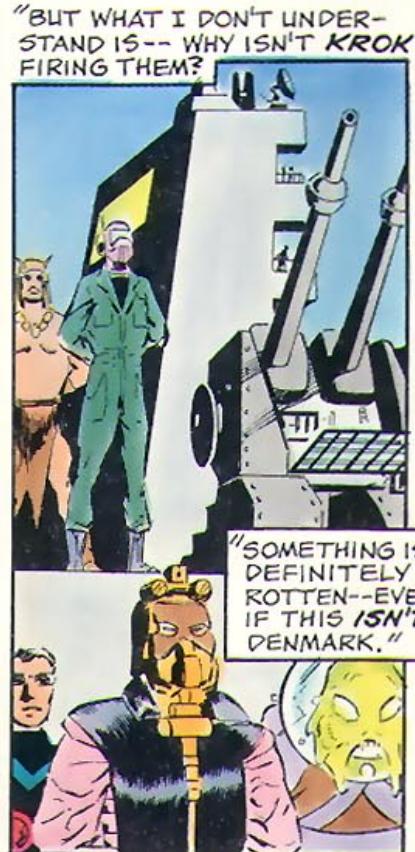
IT
MIGHT BE
BEST IF YOU
DON'T ASK.

OKEYFINE.

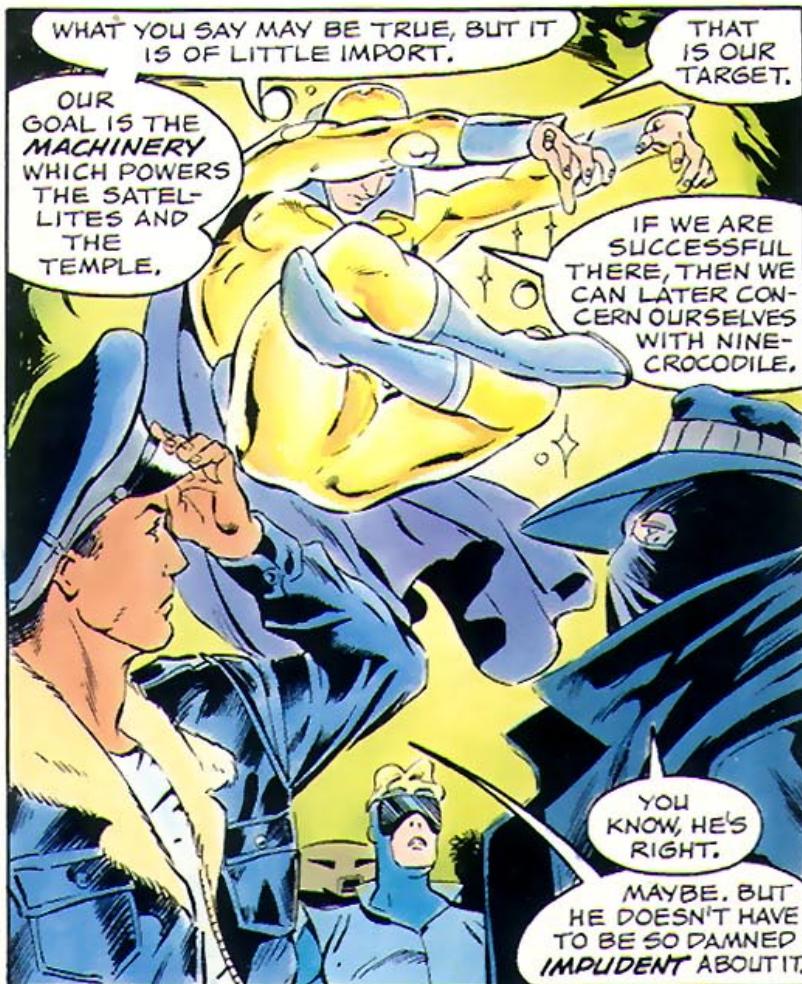
I HAVE MY OWN
SECRETS AND ABILITIES,
CROCODILE. AND
ARE WE NOT...
PARTNERS?

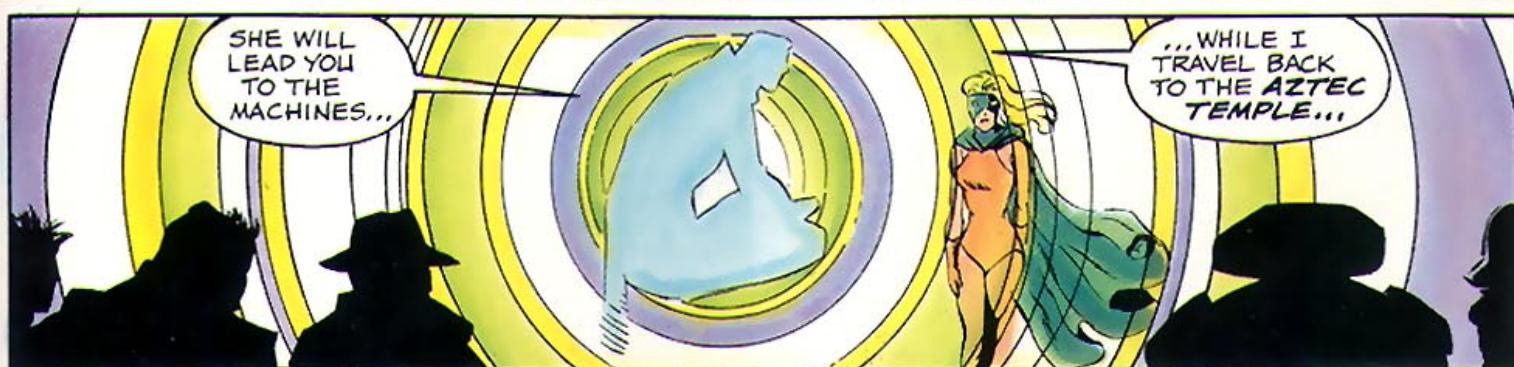
QUICKLY, THEY
COME. MAKE YOUR
DECISION.



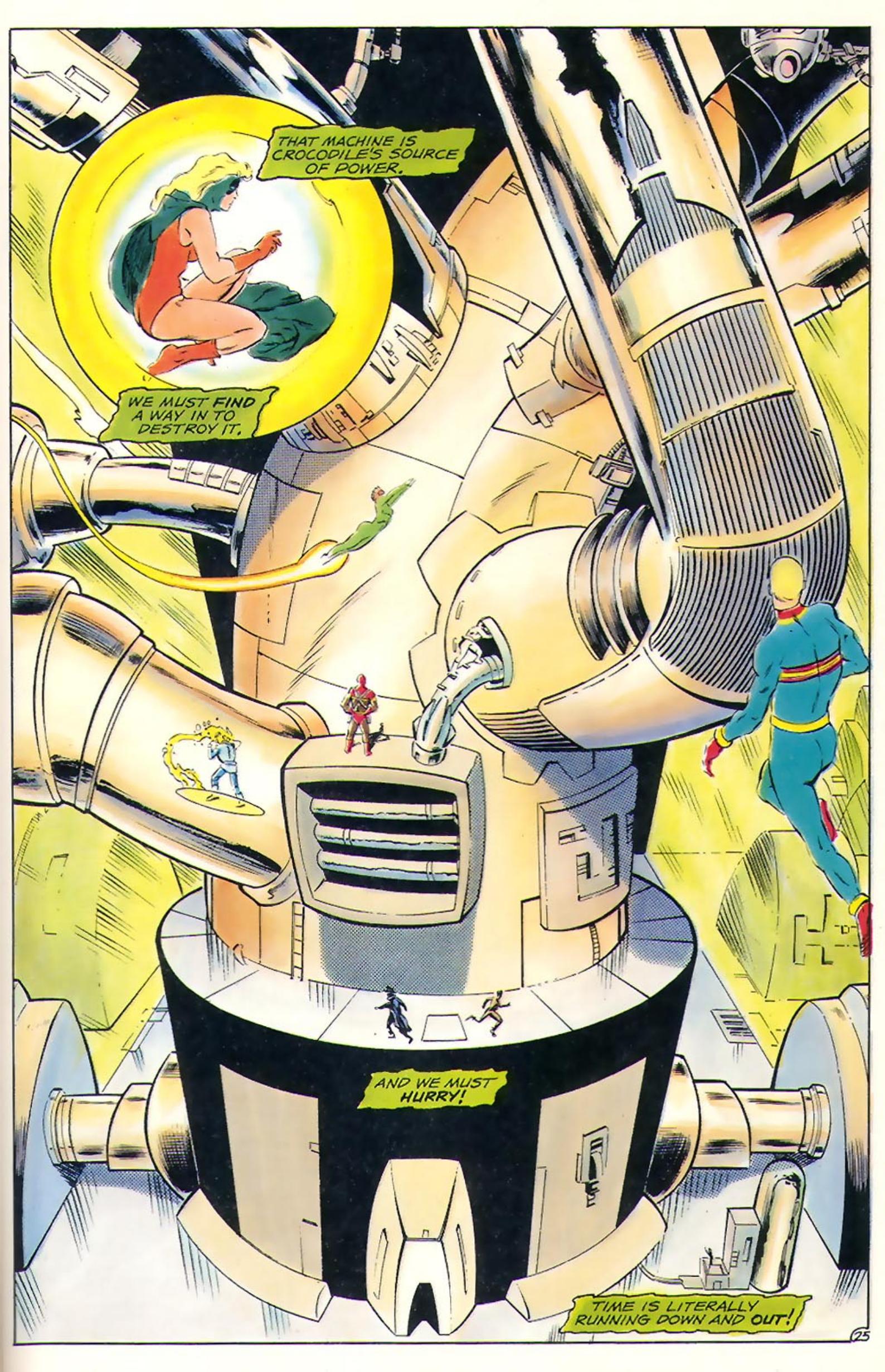










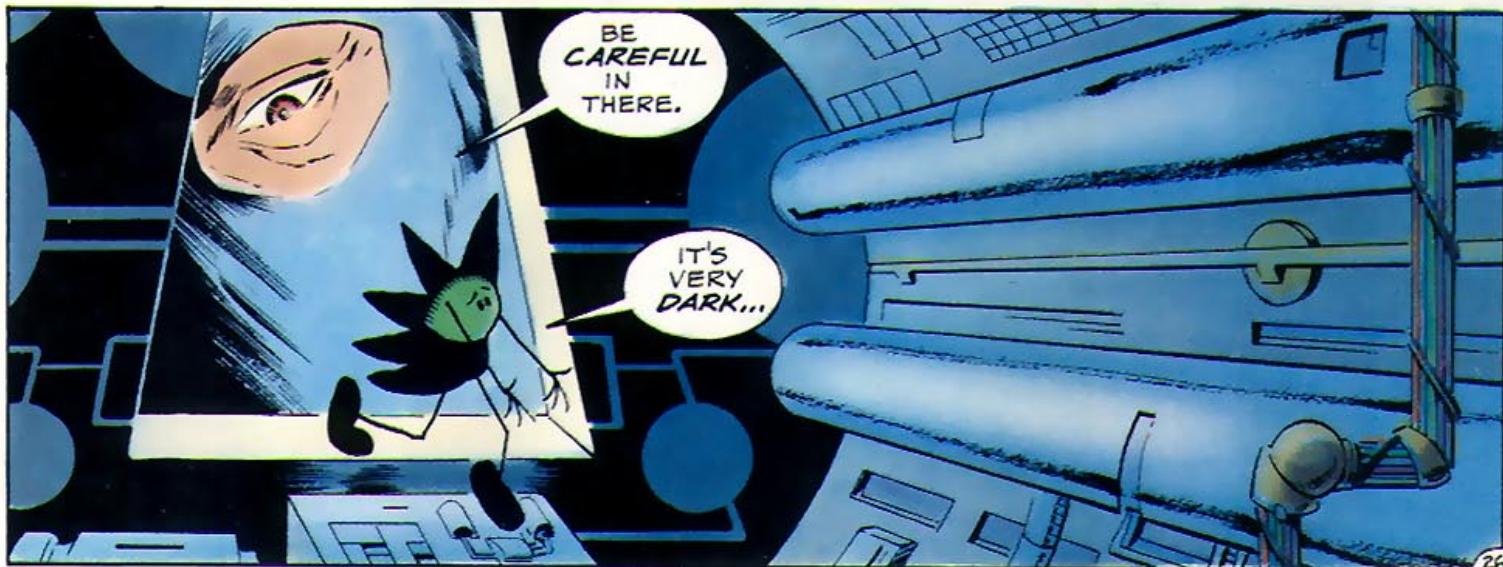
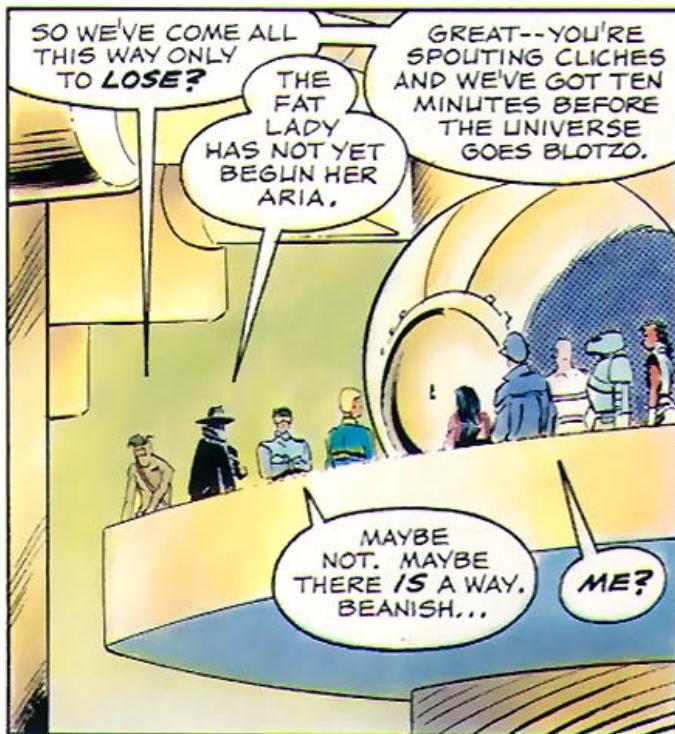


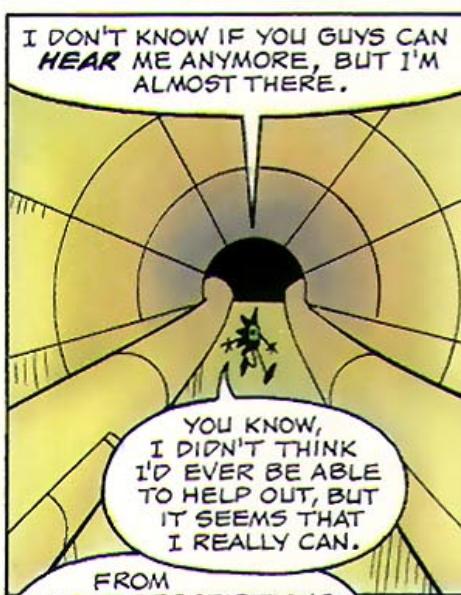
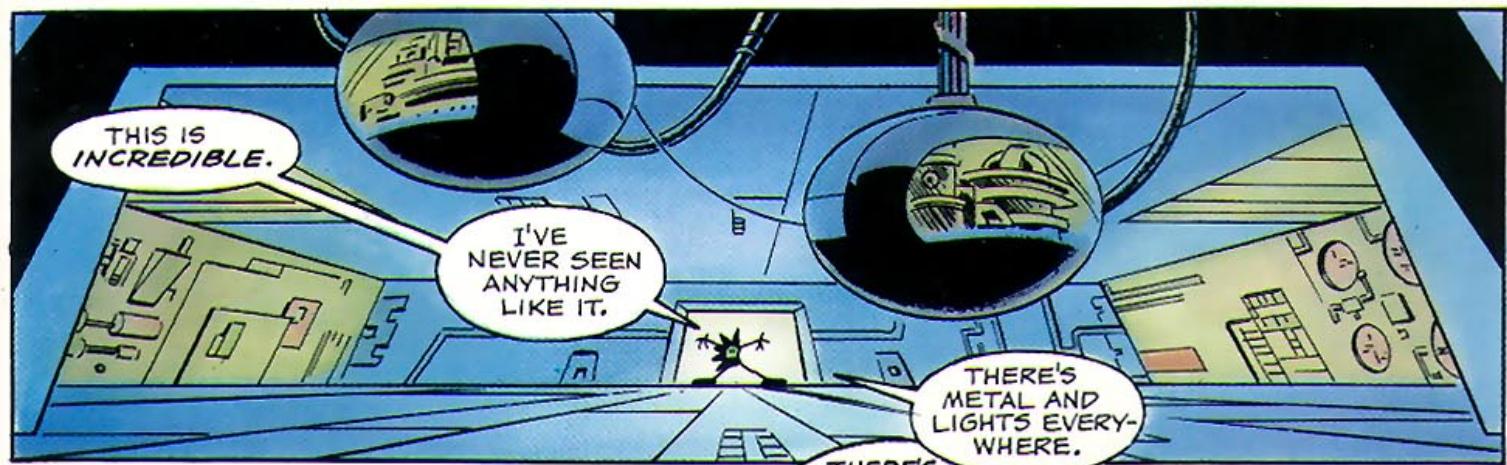
THAT MACHINE IS
CROCODILE'S SOURCE
OF POWER.

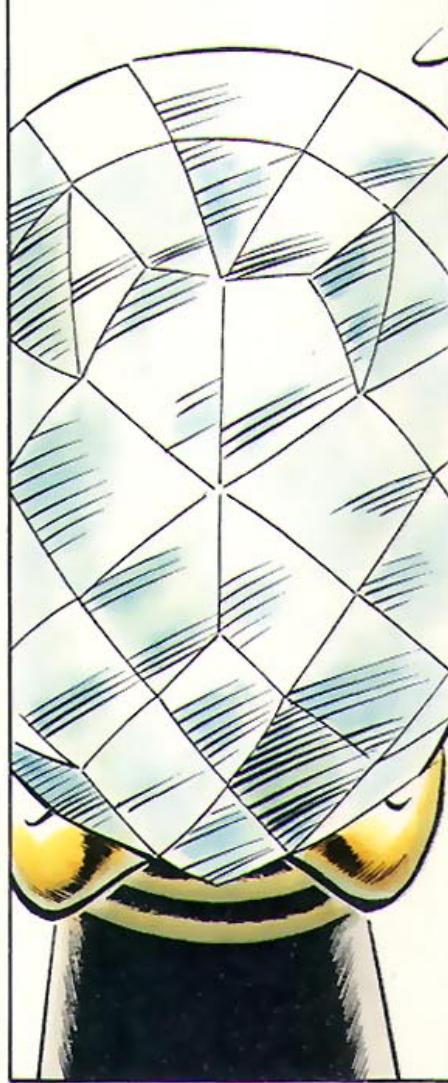
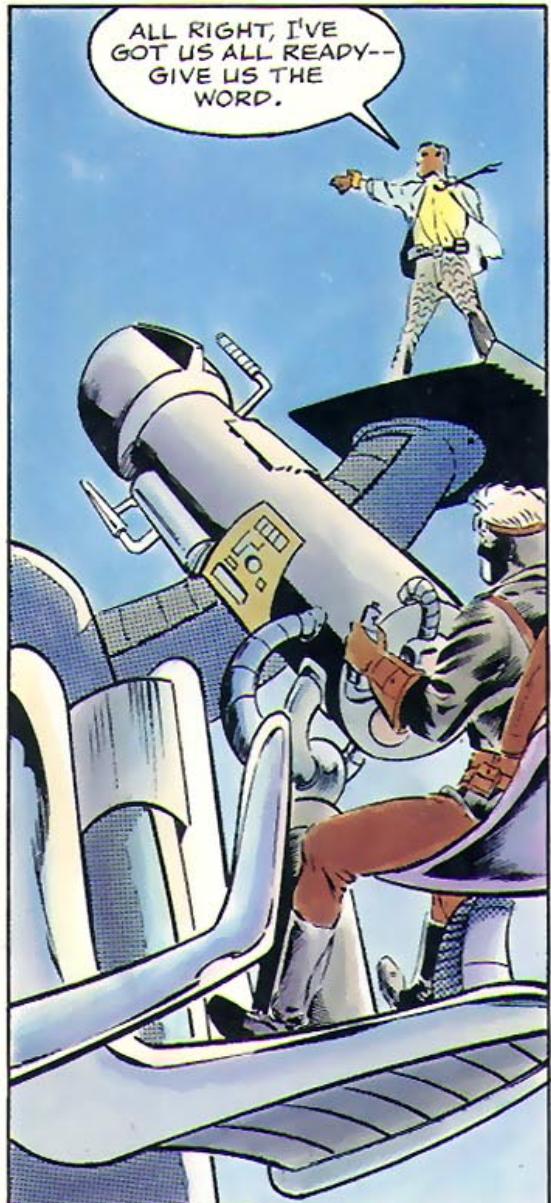
WE MUST FIND
A WAY IN TO
DESTROY IT.

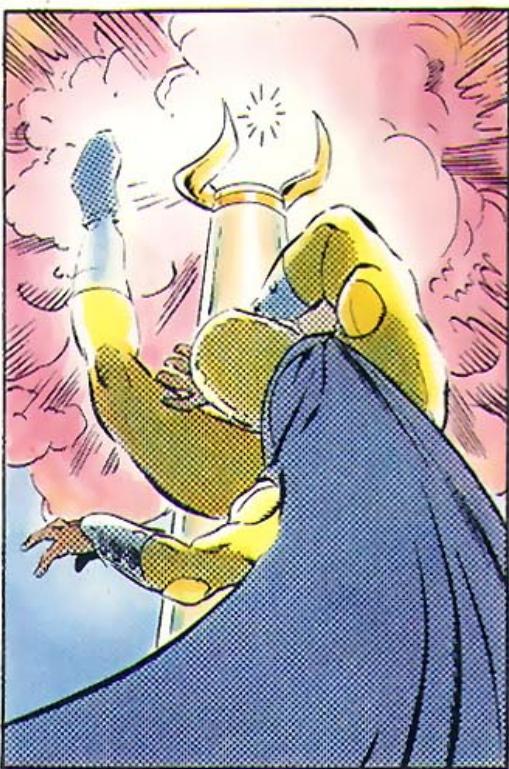
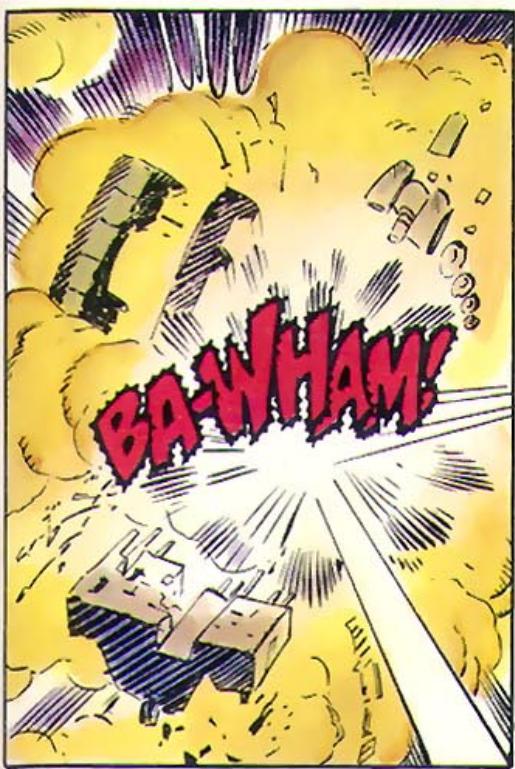
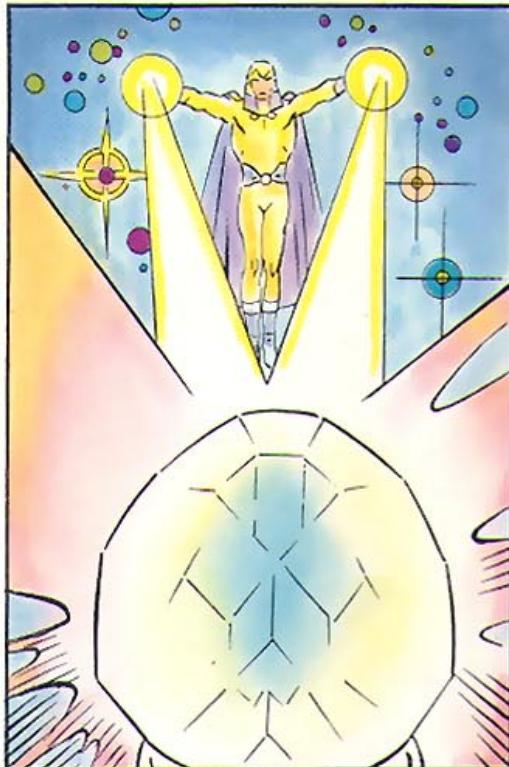
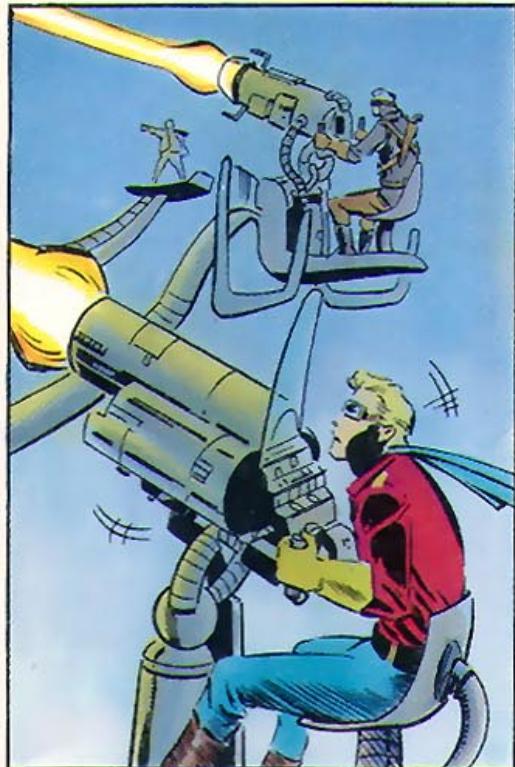
AND WE MUST
HURRY!

TIME IS LITERALLY
RUNNING DOWN AND OUT!

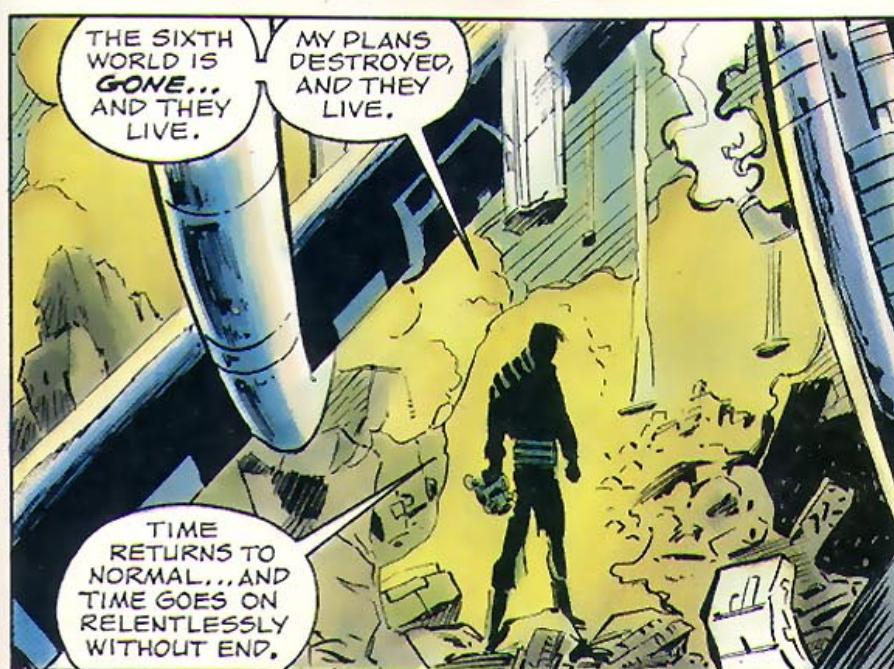
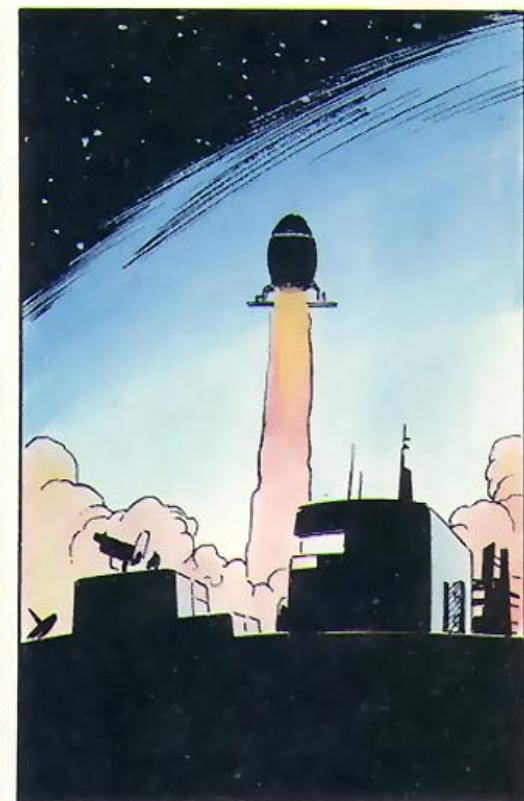
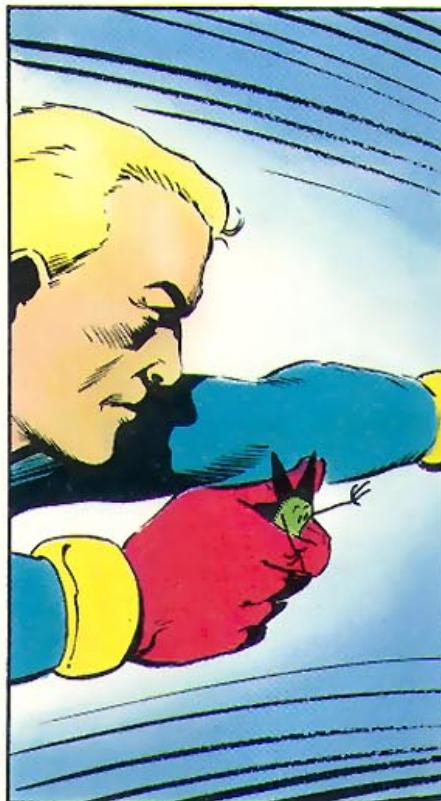
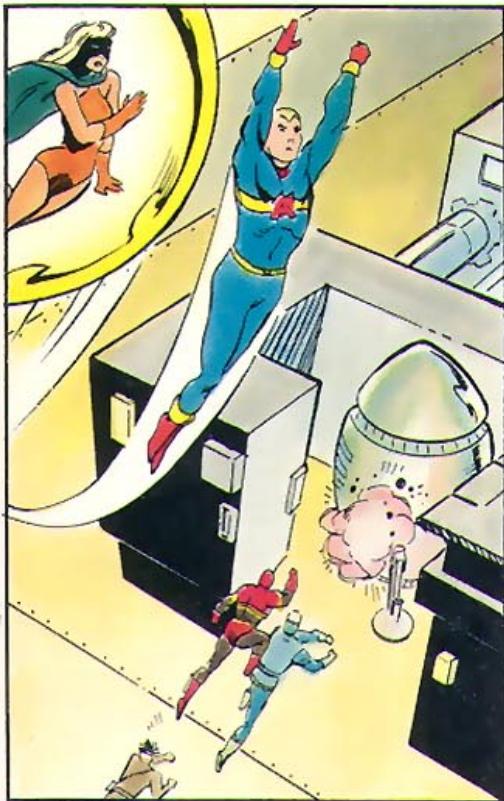


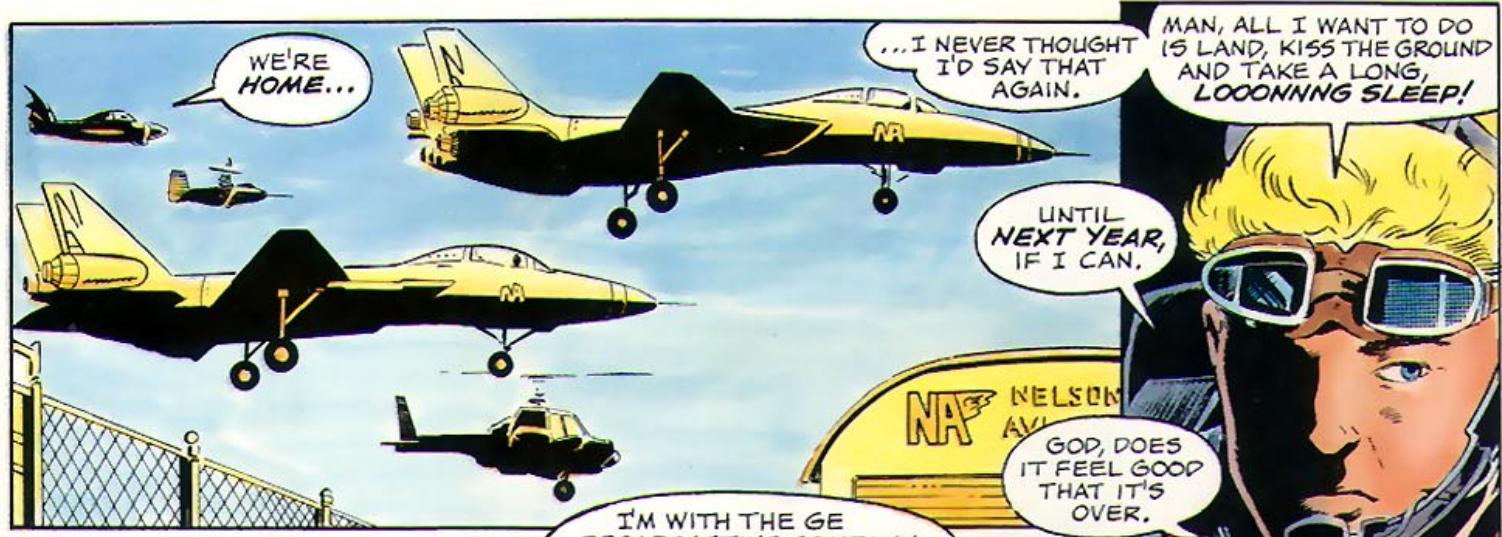




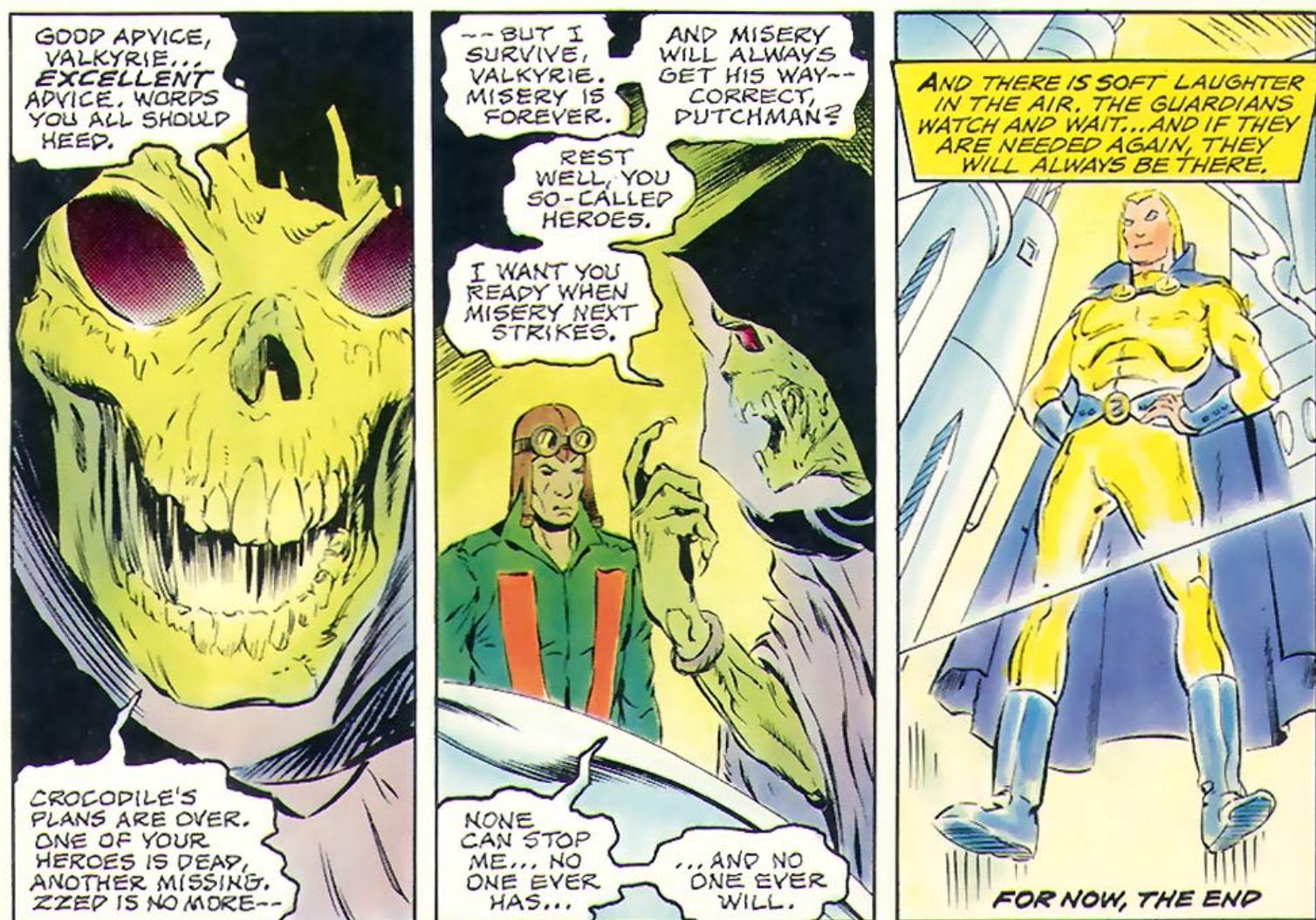
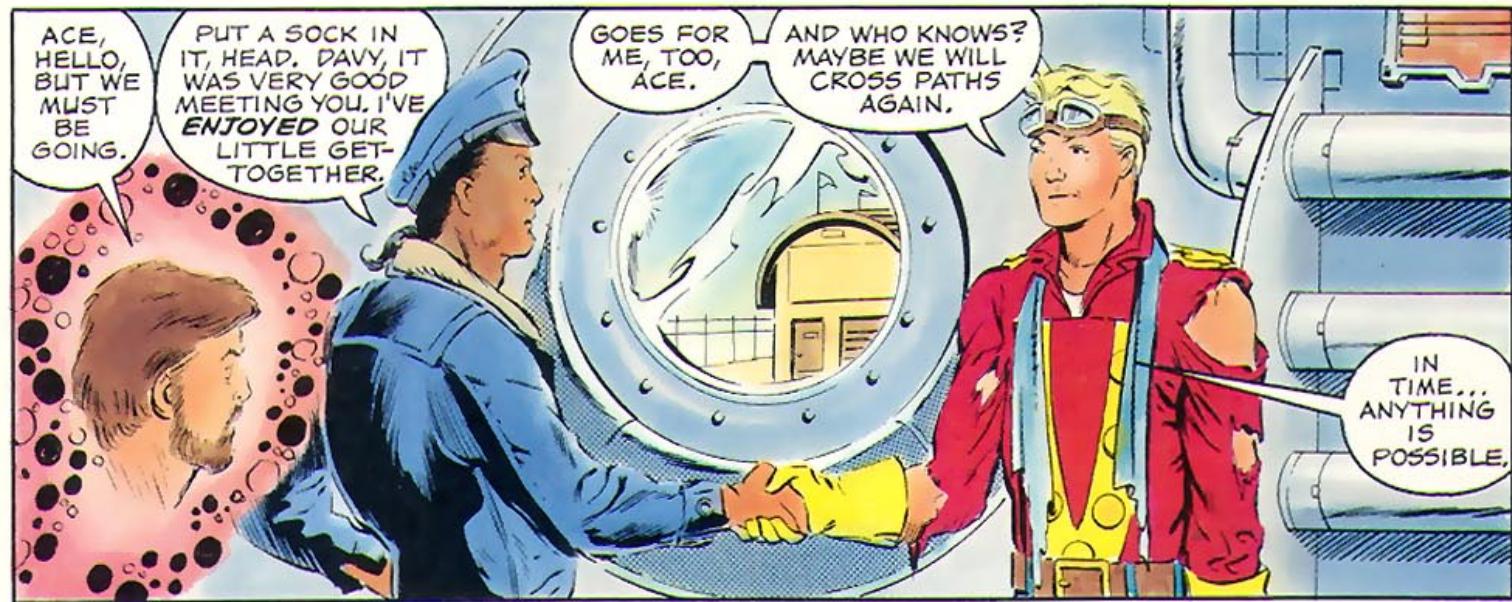






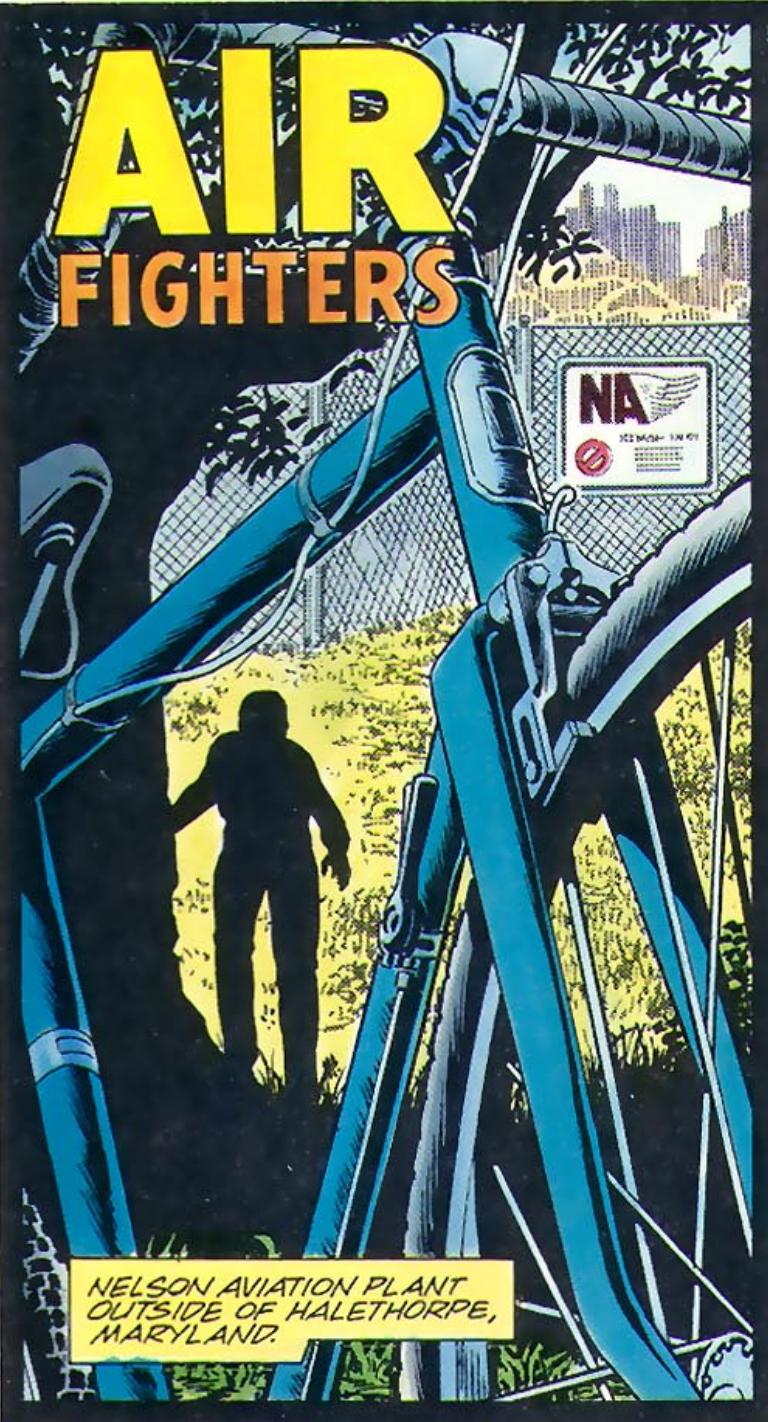




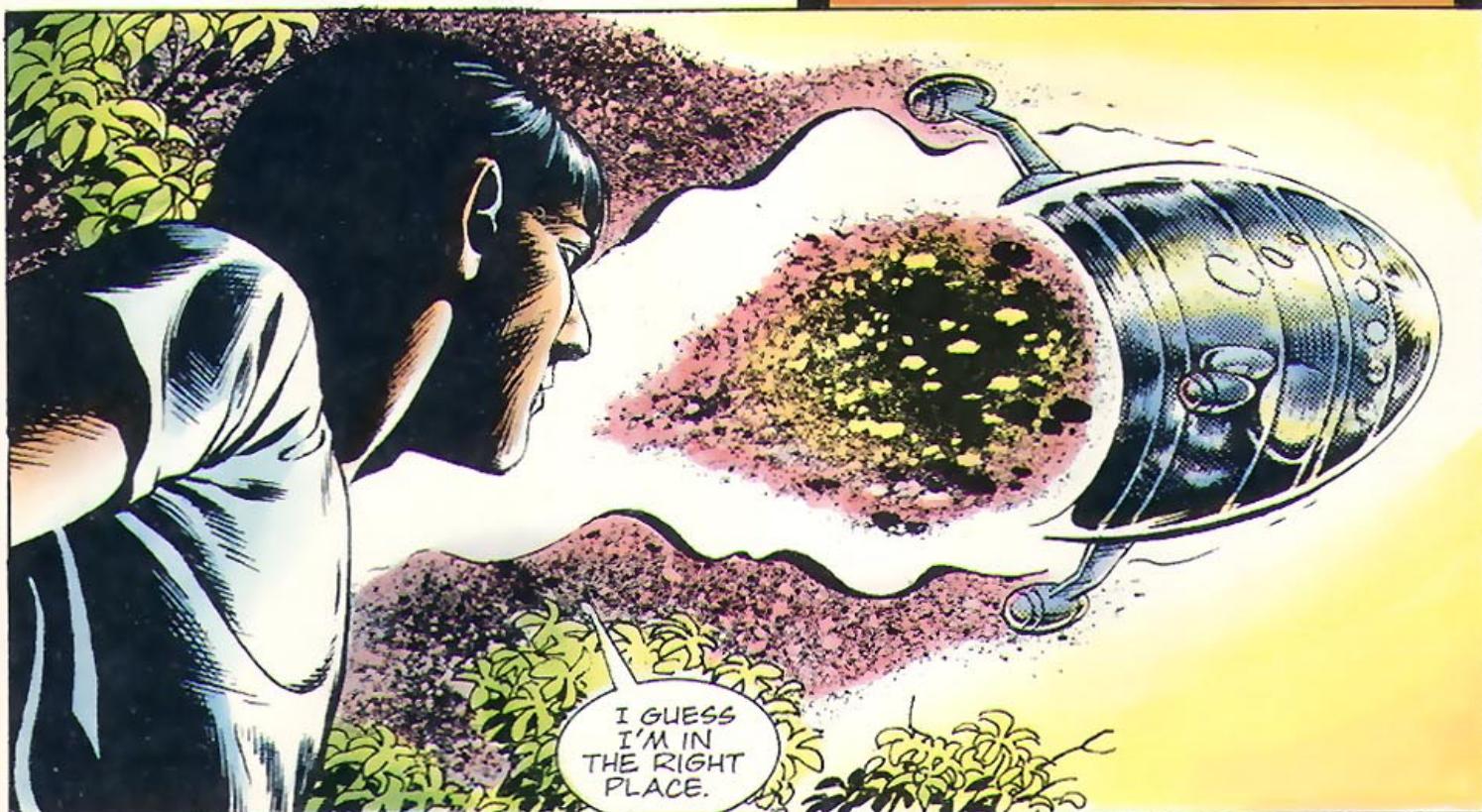


EPILOGUE:

AIR FIGHTERS



TUMBLIN' DICE





I'VE BEEN AWAY AWHILE.
BUT FROM WHAT I CAN
SEE OF THE WORLD
THESE DAYS, IT'S JUST
AS FOULED UP AS
IT EVER WAS.

MAYBE WE WOULD HAVE
BEEN BETTER OFF IF THE
WHOLE BALL OF WAX DID
GO DOWN THE
TOILET.

NO...
...LIFE'S A
BITCH AND
THEN YOU DIE,
RIGHT?

THAT'S THE
PROBLEM WITH GUYS
LIKE YOU. YOU'RE SO
PSYCHED UP TO
SAVE THE WORLD...

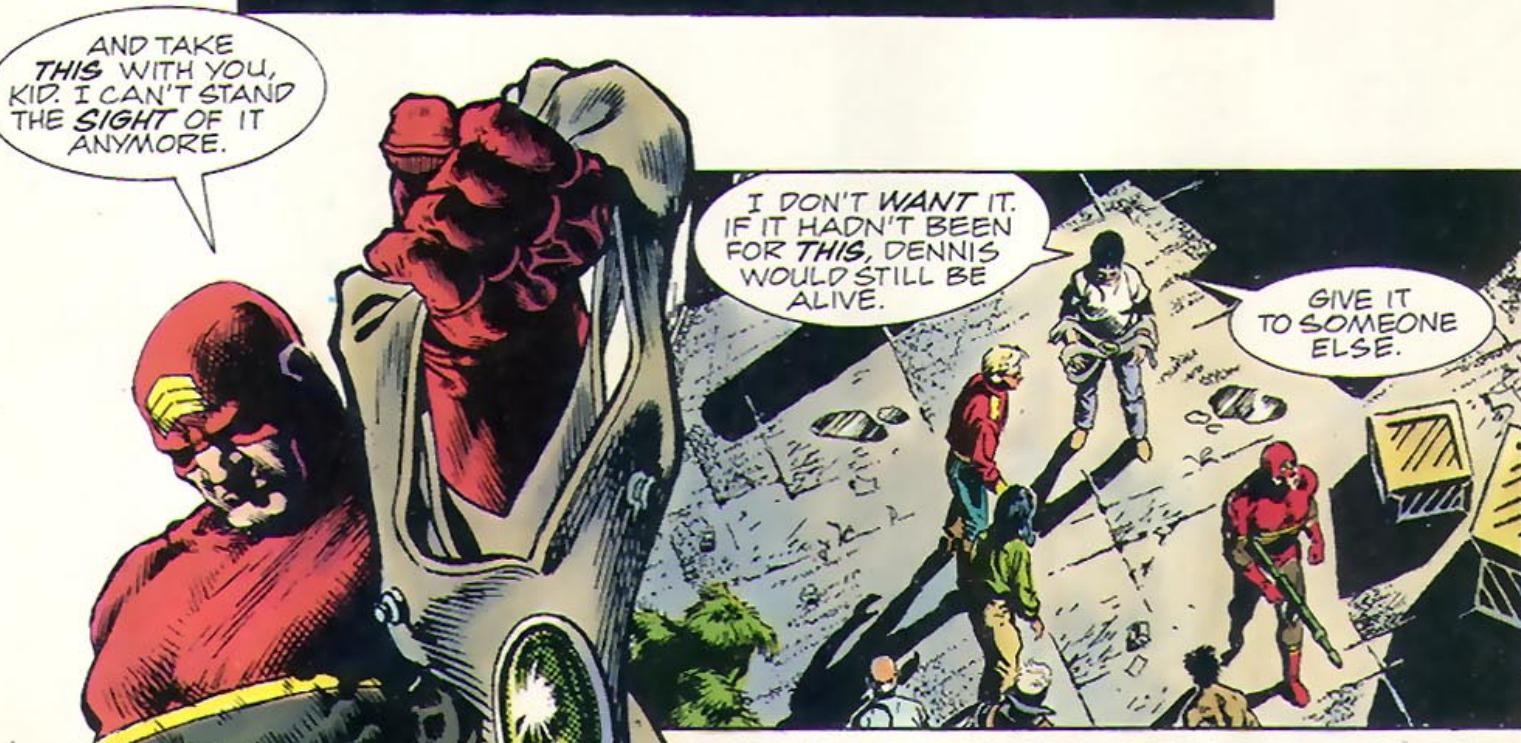
...THEN YOU
WHINE WHEN
NOBODY
THROWS YOU A
PARADE.

DENNIS WAS
MORE OF A
HERO THAN ANY
OF YOU!

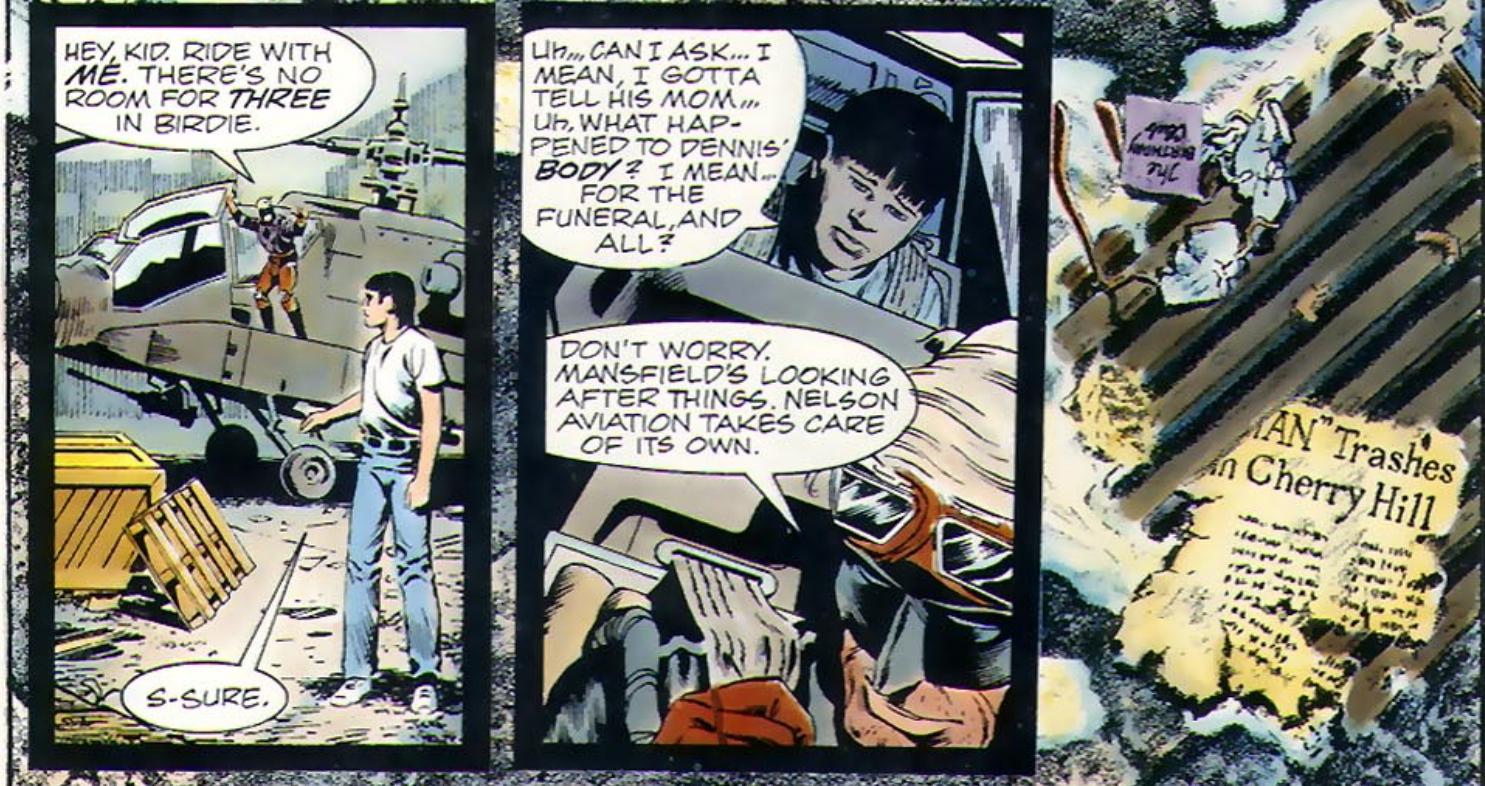
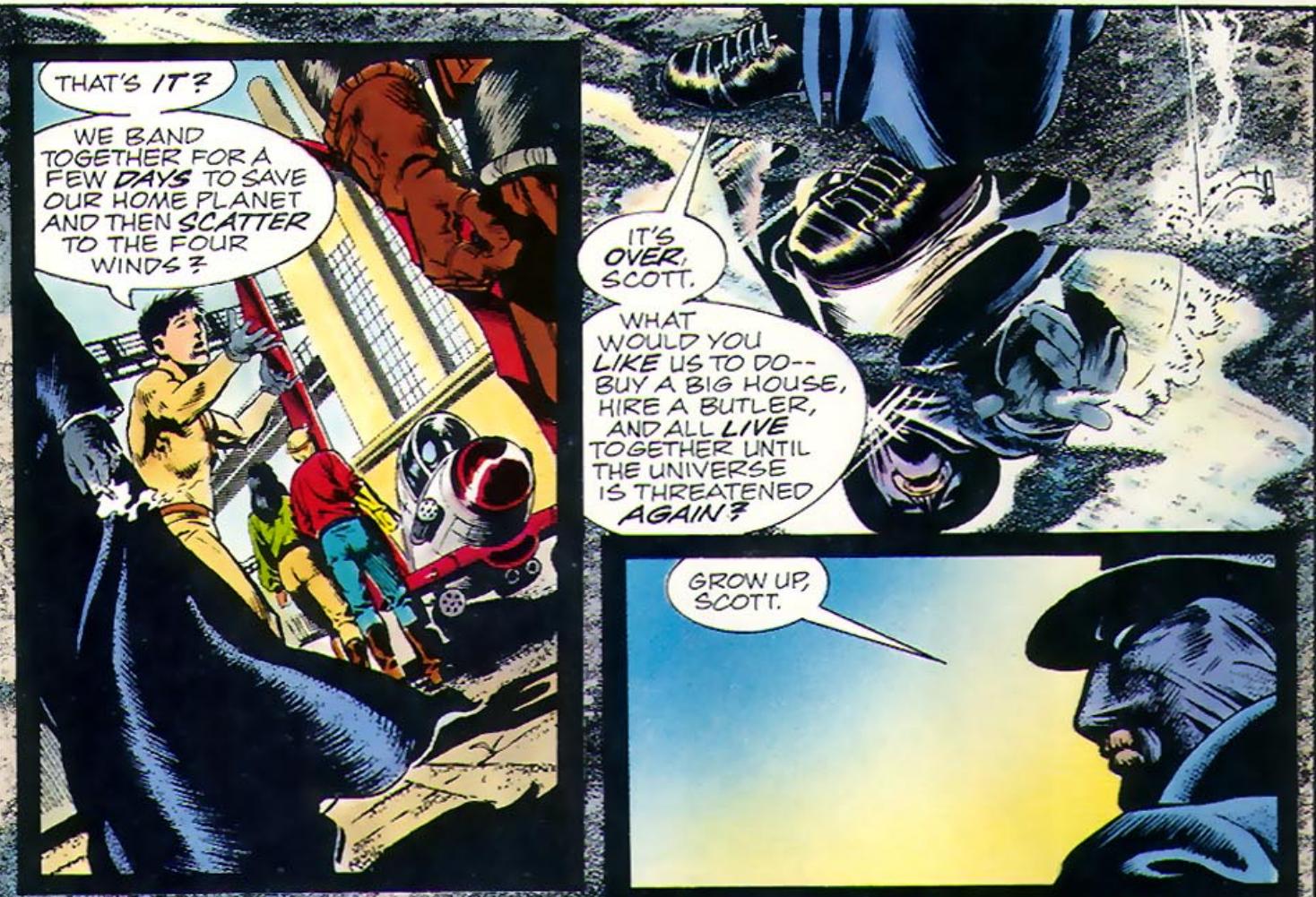
THEN IT'S
TRUE--
--DENNIS
IS DEAD?



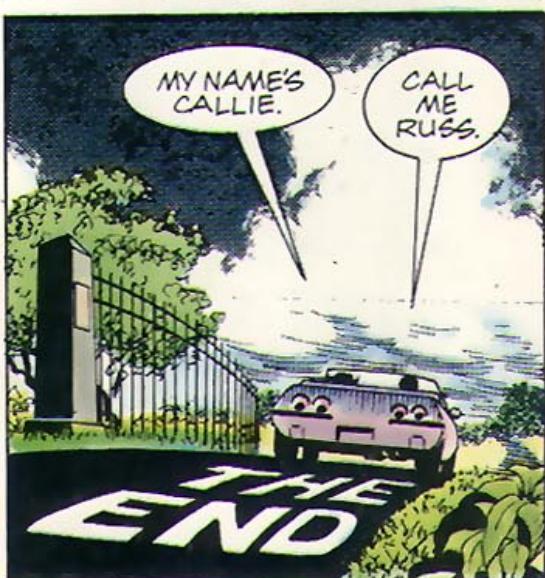
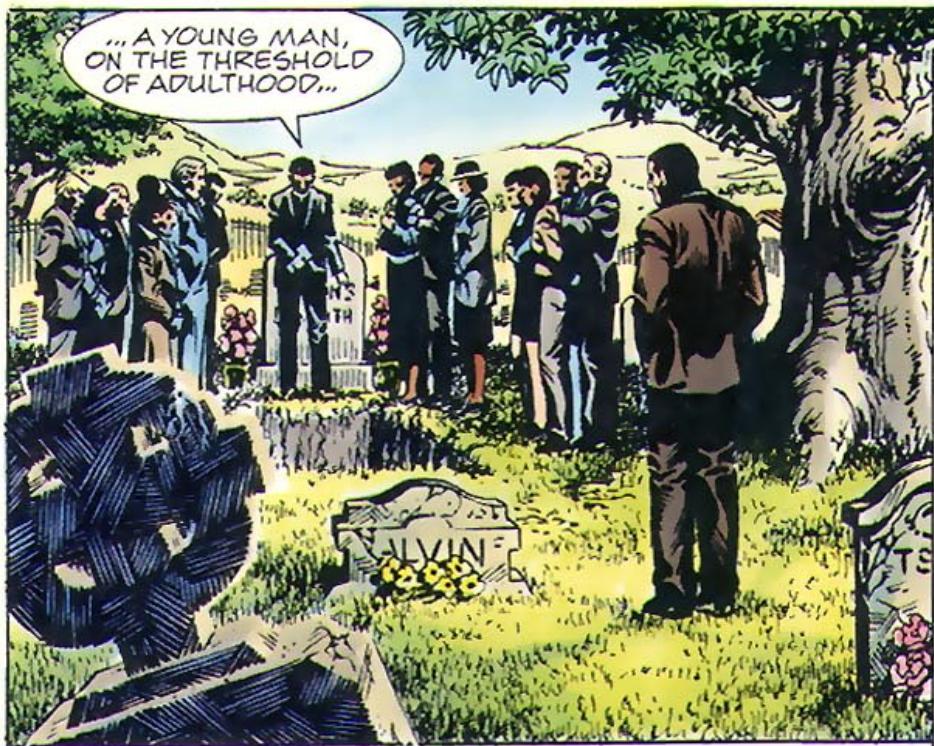
MY NAME IS BOBBY SOONG.











Ten Years Later

Like 1978 with our first graphic album, 1981 with our first magazine, and 1982 with our first color comic book, 1985 brought with it a new direction for Eclipse.

Adding the comics published by the defunct Pacific Comics to our existing line-up nearly doubled our output. There were also a few titles Pacific hoped to publish, but which for one reason or another didn't get off the ground. Three of the most interesting creations, as it turned out, were all written and illustrated in England.

The British Invasion was just gaining momentum in America. Britain's blossoming comics field coincided with the strongest U.S. dollar in history. The net result found American publishers looking for British creators and British creators looking for American publishers.

And so it was off to London for me in March 1985 to meet with the creators of the revived *Miracleman*, Alan Moore and Garry Leach; Steve (Pedro Henry) Moore and Steve Dillon of *Axel Pressbutton* fame; and Pete Milligan, Brendan McCarthy, and Brett Ewins, whose *Strange Days* comic introduced Johnny Nemo and Paradax. In the course of working out contractual deals to bring all of these wonderful comics to America, I discovered that British pubs are open odd hours. I never did quite get the hang of it, but it seemed to me that the pubs opened in the morning, closed in mid-afternoon, only to re-open again later in the day. As I say, I didn't quite get the hang of it, and I found myself having warm pints and talking contract points at the strangest hours.

One of the highlights of my visit was dinner at the home of John and Liliana Bolton. I had known John through phone conversations for many years and it was a pleasure to put the voice and face together. John, as everyone knows, draws in a wonderfully classic style; I half expected to see some of his paintings next to the Turner watercolors in the British Museum. I had always pictured John to be one of those nineteenth century artists, and he is, I'm glad to say! What surprised me, however, were the delightful art deco furnishings in John and Liliana's home. I'm not quite sure what I expected; I think late Victorian or art nouveau



by Dean Mullaney

surroundings. Certainly not the type of art deco furniture I had spent days looking for in Islington antique stores. At last I knew why I wasn't able to find any good pieces available—the Boltons had already bought them!

Vacations—even working vacations—never last forever, and I returned with agreements in hand to publish *Miracleman* and the other series.

Simultaneously, we had other new projects in the works, certainly the most important of which was Timothy Truman's *Scout*. We met Tim at least a year before he proposed the series to us, when he was out visiting his long-time buddy from their Kubert School days, our neighbor Tom Yeates. The result of that first meeting was a one-shot we published called *Killer Tales by Timothy Truman*. It included some stories Tim drew while working for TSR, and also contained the last story written by the great Gardner Fox, which Tim had a blast working on.

And so when Tim called us up a year or so later and asked if we were interested in publishing his new creation *Marauder: 1999*, we said "sure." The name was eventually changed to the now familiar *Scout*.

Tim attends a lot of comics conventions each year and I hope many of you have met him. If you have, you know what I'm about to say; if you haven't, you've got a treat to look forward to. When the bad guys have you outnumbered and trapped in a dark alley, Tim's one of those guys you'd want to have at your back. Not that he's really the rough and tough guy you'd think he was from reading his comics; no, it's his friendship, his loyalty, and his dedication that makes the man.

Scout, needless to say, was a hit from the start, and we've all enjoyed ourselves ever since.

With so many titles in production each month, Cat, Sean, Jan, and I were feeling the crunch. We needed more people on staff and first turned to a friend of Jan's from the music business, Bruce Palley, to take over some of the accounting and business management duties. Among other things, Bruce was a tour accountant for the Rolling Stones, and dealt with bands

like Def Leppard. Business management may not be the most glamorous job in the comics industry, but when you consider how many comics companies have come and gone during the ten years Eclipse has been publishing, I think you'll appreciate how important it is. At any rate, it wasn't long before Bruce became a vice president in the company. I don't know when he finds the time to sample them all, but Bruce appears to know every good restaurant between Fort Lee, New Jersey and the east side of Manhattan. To watch Bruce raise his eyebrows and nod his head in approval once the appetizers meet his standards is certainly a joy in itself.

Another important part of the Eclipse equation came our way through a combination of Coca-Cola and a neon sign. Beginning in the mid-1980s, the Chicago Comics Con and the Dallas Con were held on the same (July 4th) weekend. Since Cat and I don't have the superpower enabling us to be two places at once, we usually split up for the conventions and meet afterwards to take our summer vacation.

In 1984, Cat went to Dallas while I headed up to Chicago. The organizers of the Dallas con are among the nicest, friendliest people in the country. There are always gofers running around asking if you need anything, if you're having a good time, and all the sort of things big, friendly Texas people ask you. Well, at this convention, an eager and energetic young fan whom we had met the year before volunteered to get Cat some Coke and then stand watch over the famous Eclipse neon sign while she took a look through the dealers' room. When she returned, the young man was giving portfolio hints to an aspiring fan artist, and referring to Eclipse as "us," which impressed Cat so much that she offered to pay him to help her out at the con. Being a friendly Texan, the kid refused any payment, but asked if he could come out and work as an intern in the editorial department.

Getting his future boss a Coke may not be the most novel way to enter the comics business, but it certainly worked for Fred Burke, who five years later

is—in addition to editing Clive Barker's *Tapping the Vein*, scripting scores of Japanese manga, and the creator of *phaze*—the editor of *Total Eclipse!* Now Fred has his own legion of fans who bring him Cokes when he returns to his native Texas for the Dallas con!

To meet the demands of a constantly increasing schedule of comics, we brought in a number of people who remain good friends even in their positions elsewhere. Former editor David Allen is now the managing editor of the Rohnert Park (California) *Clarion*; former sales manager Jim Friel is an integral part of the Capital City Distribution team; and former assistant Beppe Sabatini continues to create memorable new comics stories.

When January 1986 rolled around it looked like another great year. Don Chin, whom we had met at a few conventions over the years, came to us with a new comic he created entitled *Adolescent Radioactive Black Belt Hamsters*, a parody of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, itself a parody of a number of then current fads and hits, in particular Frank Miller's *Ronin*. Don was selling parody strips to *Cracked Magazine* and *ARBBH* was a natural outgrowth of that. The idea of a parody of a parody cracked us up. It cracked up mostly everyone else, too, because it became a surprise monster hit. It seems odd to me that Don's *Hamsters* set off such an incredible craze for black-and-white parody comics, a craze that lasted way too long. At the time, the *Turtles* were already an established sensation, but it wasn't until a while after the first *Hamster* issue that the fad developed. Who would have guessed...?

Months later, Don discovered something else of interest to us in the Eclipse office. Don lives up in Eureka, California, about twice as far north from here as we are from San Francisco. One evening, returning from a concert in the City, Don stayed over at our place. Like a good guest, he brought a sleeping bag with him just in case. When he unzipped the nylon bag, Bob the Cat completely flipped out and tried to run right through the glass back door! It took us a

while to figure out that it was the nylon that drove Bob berserk, nylon that (to him) sounded like raging water. You see, we found Bob after the great Guerneville flood, in which he was trapped in a flooded house for nearly a week.

Ah yes, the flood! By mid-January, the daily rains in northern California had become a way of life. After a few weeks we felt like we were living through that Ray Bradbury story in *The Illustrated Man* about the planet of never-ending rain. Finally, on Valentine's Day, all hell—and the dam upstream—let loose, and our entire town flooded. The story of that flood—in which we lost homes, most of our worldly possessions, and the entire Eclipse comic book inventory—has been recounted elsewhere, particularly in the "Penumbra" column that appears on the inside front cover of most of our comics.

I'll spare you the details of Sean and I wading through our respective houses, waist-deep in muddy water, or of Cat waiting for the Red Cross canoe to rescue her from our office, or of people rowing down the aisles of the Safeway supermarket, picking up canned food for over 1,000 stranded townspeople. The flood and its aftermath set us back tremendously. With the help of many, many people, including Tom Yeates, Lela Dowling, Ken Macklin, Tim Truman, and Mark Evanier, we picked ourselves up and by mid-July, hit the stands with the first issues of our latest innovation: bi-weekly comics!

Airboy and *The New Wave* debuted that summer and started our working relationship and friendship with *Airboy* scripter Chuck Dixon. Remember what I said about Tim Truman earlier? Well, the same applies to Chuck. There are few people I've ever met who I can unequivocally say are the kind I'd want with me in that dangerous dark alley. The 4Winds duo (does that make them 2Winds?) are among them. Chuck and Tim's first *Airboy* storyline remains, I believe, one of the best stories I've ever published. In fact, we'll be repackaging those first five issues in a deluxe graphic album in June so it will be preserved

The brothers Mullaney, with cousins and grandfather, in their grandfather's store, July 1960. Jan's at the far left, Dean at the far right. Notice the comic book rack at the bottom right.



on bookshelves forever.

One of the reasons we decided to publish *Airboy* and *The New Wave* in a bi-weekly format was to test reader response. For two years previous, I had been negotiating with various Japanese comics publishers to bring Japanese *manga* to America, and since *manga* stories run so long, I hoped to publish the English versions on a bi-weekly schedule. Encouraged by the reaction to our bi-weekly American comics, we got the negotiations with Japanese publishers into high gear.

By January 1987, Fred Burke and Letitia Glozer came on staff full-time and when the negotiations were completed to publish *Kamui*, *Mai the Psychic Girl*, and *Area 88*, they were given the editorial assignments for those books.

Letitia, as a few thousand of you already know, is Cat's half-sister, but hiring her was not just a case of rampant nepotism. As Cat explains it, she knew Letitia had the potential to be a truly great comics editor from an early age because when she went off to college, she left her *Pogo* paperbacks behind, and when she returned, Letitia had appropriated them! Seriously, though, Letitia's interest in fine art serves us well, as she edits such deluxe material as Scott Hampton's *Pigeons from Hell*, Bo Hampton's *Lost Planet*, Alan Moore and John Totleben's (soon to be Neil Gaiman and Mark Buckingham's) *Miracleman*, and such critical favorites as *The Dreamery* and *Fusion*.

The "Conceptual Editor" of *The Dreamery* and *Fusion* is Lex Nakashima. He's also the CE of an upcoming fantasy mini-series that I can't tell you about yet. Lex is to comics what Sol Hurok is to opera: he is a true impresario who conceives a vehicle in which to present the talent he admires. Both *The Dreamery* and *Fusion* have been a labor of love for Lex. There are very few things we at the Eclipse office enjoy more than a visit from Lex, Lela Dowling, and Ken Macklin. When Lex's smiling face peers in our

window, we pretty much give up the idea of working for the rest of the afternoon. Y'see, Lex, Lela, and Ken usually show up bearing cookies, fruit, salame, cheese, and party favors, and their arrival is always a great excuse to sit around chewing the food and the fat. Lex is in the process of producing a horror film being shot in the southwest, and we're anxiously looking forward to seeing production stills. When the film's released, Cat will surely let you know in the "Penumbra."

Before I get to the bottom of this page and the end of this final essay, I'd like to say a word or two about one of the more visible Eclipse people out there—Beau "LaDuke" Smith, our intrepid Sales Manager. Most of you know Beau as this tough guy, who always talks about guns and ammo, action and adventure, and beer, women, and song. But I know better. At the risk of blowing Beau's cover, I've got to tell you that he wouldn't hurt a fly. So what if he collects guns, reads *Executioner* books until the covers wear off, and thinks John Wayne was the greatest American who ever lived. Beau's a working man Democrat, of the Dixiecrat variety, and he reminds me of a cross between Sinclair Lewis' Babbitt and a hero out of Zane Grey's westerns.

I'm sure most of you will meet him on one outing or another, and when you do, pat him on the back from me for a job well done.

Well, that's all there is, folks. Thanks for taking the time to read these words, and I hope you enjoyed the *Total Eclipse* storyline Marv, Fred, and Bo brought you. I'd appreciate getting some mail from our readers, so please send it to "Total Comments" c/o Eclipse Comics. I'll be sure to read every letter you send.

Finally, since I don't write comics and therefore never get the chance to dedicate anything to anyone, here's my one big chance and I'm not going to let it slip by. This one's for my mom, for every reason you can imagine.

WHO'S WHO IN TOTAL ECLIPSE



The Heap

WWI flying ace Baron Von Emmelman was shot down in a swamp, becoming the original bog thing.

This marauding mallard is out for vengeance against the powerful Godcorp.

Destroyer Duck



Flying Dutchman

Skywolf's old ally is now trapped in Misery's dreaded Airtomb.

Smart and cunning, Bruce wields the bo staff with the expertise of the great monk master. He drives nice sports cars in his spare time.

Bruce



Marlene

Valkyrie's best friend and confidante, Marlene shares a Manhattan apartment with the swashbuckling model/heroine.

The youngest of the ARBBH, Jackie would rather be watching "Pee Wee's Playhouse" than saving the universe from destruction.

Jackie



Bobby Soong

Bobby was Dennis Foreman's best friend before he became Strike—and tried to be, after.

The most spiritual black belt hamster, Chuck vows never to inflict physical harm to others unless the safety of loved ones is in jeopardy.

Chuck



Lester Mansfield

Nelson Aviation's security chief is in reality the dwarf son of Rackman.

The "original party animal" before Spuds McKenzie ever hit the scene, Clint walks short and carries a big gun—his trusty .44 Magnum!

Clint



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Finale!

It approaches with unbearable swiftness, as every hero—from the tiniest bean to the mightiest god—answers the call with unequalled courage. Dr. Eclipse must at last lead this strange band of allies in a race against time itself, run amok.

The gem which transformed the immortal Zzed into a being of unimaginable power appears indestructible—and deadly beyond compare. It seethes with the malignant energy of the total eclipse, which will destroy our time, our universe.

The end is near.

On earth and in the meld, this final battle presses on, as untold power, ability, and knowledge are added to the arsenal for good. But Misery and Nine-Crocodile will not die. Only the combined might of a universe's heroes can stop their unholy alliance. And billions of lives hang in the balance.

Total Eclipse

It's Eclipse Comics' Tenth Anniversary. In this issue, you'll encounter Airboy, Valkyrie, Skywolf, Miracleman, The Prowler, Strike, the Heap, Aztec Ace and many other stars from Eclipse's first decade of innovative comics publishing.

Marv Wolfman, writer, is the author of *The New Teen Titans*, *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, *Tomb of Dracula*, and countless other acclaimed comic books. The Zzed saga is his most intricate plot to date.

Bo Hampton, pencil artist, is well-known for his detailed linework and powerful layouts in books such as *Airboy*, *Lost Planet*, *Luger*, and *The New Mutants*. *Total Eclipse* is a new peak in his artistic development.

Rick Bryant, ink artist, has graced the pages of *Miracleman*, *Marvel Fanfare*, *Moon Knight*, and *World of Krypton*. In *Total Eclipse*, he perfectly complements Hampton's detail with his own dynamic style.

ECLIPSE  **BOOKS™**

